

ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

BEATRICE

A NOVEL

Translated from, the German by
AGNES JACQUES



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PREFACE

Beatrice, written in 1913, but presented now in English for the first time, is the second of Schnitzler's woman trilogy, which includes *Bertha Garlan* (1900) and *Fräulein Else* (1925). The heroines of these novels spring from a common root—good Austrian upper middle-class, where situations such as they must face are entirely unprecedented. Intellectually these three women are strikingly similar—they are able to view their anguish with detachment, impersonally and without illusion.

In one particular Beatrice differs from her sisters. While they are partly the victims of circumstance, yet they have voluntarily chosen their careers. But Beatrice is *driven* on to her destruction, powerless to stem the tide which she sees engulfing her. Mother-love, so strong in her, only enhances her despair, but does not help her meet the onslaught of desire. The utter realization of her plight, coupled with a complete paralysis of will, is the root of Beatrice's tragedy. In *Beatrice* Schnitzler is a fatalist—here sex is an external force—relentless, uncontrollable, and overwhelming.

In his woman trilogy, the author is a different Schnitzler from the one to whom we have become accustomed through *Anatol* and *Reigen* and *Liebelei*. His prose is just as gracious, his wit as ironic, his portraiture of men and women, as cruelly frank. But to these qualities he has added a veil of sadness, a tenderness, an uncanny penetration into the finest shadings of feminine thought and emotion that will make these novels stand out long after the hard brilliance of *Reigen* will cease to dazzle the mind.

I should like to make acknowledgment to Miss Edna Staudinger for her invaluable assistance in the proof-reading and final revision of this book.

A. J.

PART ONE

SHE thought she heard a sound in the next room. She left her half-finished letter, went softly towards the partly open door and peered into the darkened room, where her son lay fast asleep on the divan. As she stepped inside, she could see how Hugo's breast rose and fell regularly in the healthy sleep of youth. His soft, rather crumpled collar lay open at his throat; he was fully clothed, even to the heavy spiked boots which he always wore in the country. Obviously he had intended to lie down for just a short time during the heat of midday, and then to resume his studies, for his books and papers lay open around him. Now he threw his head from side to side as if trying to awaken, but he only stirred a little and slept on. The mother's eyes, by this time accustomed to the darkness, could no longer ignore the fact that the strange, painfully intent expression around the boy's lips that she had noticed again and again during the past days, did not leave him even in sleep. Beatrice sighed and shook her head. Then she went back to her room, shutting the door quietly behind her. She looked at the letter, but had no desire to go on with it. Dr. Teichmann, for whom it was intended, was certainly not the man with whom she could speak unreservedly—in fact, she already regretted the all too friendly smile with which she had bidden him farewell from the train. For just now, during these summer weeks in the country, the memory of her husband, who had died five years before, was more than ever alive within her, and she laid aside all thoughts of the lawyer's wooing and the proposal of marriage—which he had not yet made, but which was bound to come—together with all similar thoughts concerning her own future. She felt she could speak of her concern for Hugo least of all with the man who would see in it not so much a proof of confidence as a definite sign of encouragement. Therefore she destroyed the letter and went irresolutely to the window.

The line of mountains across the lake dissolved in tremulous rings of air. Below, in the water, sparkled the reflection of the sun, broken into a thousand rays. Beatrice turned away her eyes, blinded by the light, after casting a fleeting glance over the narrow meadow land, the dust-exhaling country road, the blinking roofs of the villas, and the motionless field of young corn in her garden. Her glance rested on the white bench under her window—and she recalled the many times when her husband had sat there dreaming over some role, or dozing, especially when the air was so redolent of summer as it was today. She remembered how she would lean over the sill to stroke the gray-black curly hair and run her fingers tenderly through it, till Ferdinand, who though immediately awake, but feigning sleep so that he might not interrupt her caresses, would slowly turn around and look up at her with his bright child's eyes, which could look so heroic or heavy with death on those long

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ago, but never to be forgotten magic evenings. She loved to think of those times, though she knew she should not, certainly not with those sighs which in spite of herself came from her lips. For Ferdinand himself—in the days that were past, he had made her swear to it—wanted his memory to be celebrated only by pleasant recollections, and by an untroubled acceptance of new happiness. And Beatrice thought: “How dreadful it is to think that we could speak of such horror in such bright times, jokingly and lightly, as if it concerned only others and could never fall upon us. And then when it really comes, we do not grasp it—and yet we endure it—and time passes, and we live on, and we sleep in the same bed that we shared once with our beloved, drink out of the same glass that he touched with his lips, pick strawberries in the shade of the same pine where we picked them with one who will never pick them again—and still we never quite understand either the meaning of death or life.”

She had often sat on this bench at Ferdinand’s side, while the child, followed by the loving glances of his parents, had romped in the garden with ball or hoop. But as well as she knew in her mind that that Hugo who lay asleep there on the divan with the new painful expression around his mouth was the same child that played in the garden but a few years ago, in her heart she could not comprehend it any more than that Ferdinand was dead—more truly dead than Hamlet or Cyrano or King Richard in whose masks she had so often seen him die. But that she would probably never quite grasp, for between the bright full present and the dark mystery of death, there had not even elapsed weeks or days of suffering. Healthy and happy, Ferdinand had left the house one day to attend a theatrical performance, and within an hour they had brought him back from the railroad station, where the stroke had felled him.

While Beatrice clung to these memories, in her heart she felt all the time some other ghostly tormenting thing which awaited her solution. It was only after much meditation, that she knew that the last sentence in her unfinished letter, in which she had wanted to mention Hugo, would not leave her in peace, and that she must think it through to the end. It was clear to her that something either had happened or was about to happen to Hugo, something she had long awaited, but still had not considered possible. In earlier years, when he was still a child, she had dearly cherished the thought that later she would be not only mother, but friend and confidante to her boy—and till just recently, when he would come to her with his tales of school mishaps or to confess his first boyish love affairs, she dared imagine that her wish might be gratified. Had he not let her read those touching childish verses which he had written to little Elise Weber, the sister of a schoolmate of his, and which Elise herself had never seen? And even last winter, had he not told his mother that a little girl, whose name he gallantly kept secret, had kissed him on the cheek during a dance? And last

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spring, had he not come to her much disturbed to tell her of two boys in his class who had spent an evening at the Prater in questionable company, and who had boasted of coming home at three in the morning? And so Beatrice had dared hope that Hugo would choose her as confidante in his more serious emotional experiences, and that she would be able by encouragement and advice to keep him from the many sorrows and dangers of youth. But now she saw that these had been the dreams of an over-indulgent mother's heart, for at the first real conflict of the soul, Hugo showed himself strange and taciturn and his mother remained shy and helpless before these new events.

She shuddered, for at the first breath of wind, like a sneering confirmation of the fear in her heart, she saw down in the valley the hated white banner fluttering from the roof of the bright villa on the lake shore. Rippling jauntily, it waved the importunate restless greeting of a depraved woman to the boy whom she wanted to ruin. In spite of herself, Beatrice raised a menacing hand, then hurried back into the room in eager haste to see her son and have it out with him at once. She listened at the connecting door for a moment, for she did not want to awaken him from his good sleep, and she thought she heard his regular boyish breathing as before. Carefully she opened the door, intending to await Hugo's awakening, and then sitting beside him on the divan, with motherly tact, to win his secret from him. But to her astonishment, she discovered that Hugo was no longer there. He had gone out without saying even adieu to his mother, as he had always done before, and without the accustomed farewell kiss—evidently he, too, feared the question which for days had been visible on her lips and which, as she knew now for the first time, she had expected to put to him at that moment. Was he already so far from her, already torn away by restless desire? That was what the first hand-clasp of that woman had made of him, when he met her recently on the wharf. That was what her look had done to him yesterday, when she smilingly greeted him from the gallery of the swimming pool, as his glowing boyish body had come swimming up out of the waves. Of course—he was more than seventeen, and she had never imagined that he would be spared for one certain girl who was destined for him from the beginning of time, and who would meet him as young and pure as he himself was. But only this had she wished for him: that his youth should not fall a victim to the lust of such a woman, who owed her half-forgotten stage reputation only to a glittering wantonness, and whose life and calling had not been changed even by her late marriage.

Beatrice sat on Hugo's divan in the half-darkened room, her eyes closed, her head in her hands, deliberating. Where might Hugo be? With the Baroness perhaps? That was unbelievable. These things could not develop so rapidly. But was there still any

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possibility of saving her beloved boy from this miserable affair? She was afraid not. For indeed she had forebodings: just as Hugo had the features of his father, so did his father's blood run through his veins, that dark blood of those men from a different world, a lawless world, where boys were inflamed with the dark passions of men, while their eyes even in maturity gleamed with childish dreams. Was it only the father's blood? Did hers run more coolly? Dared she say that, simply because since the death of her husband no temptation had come to her? And because she had never belonged to another, was what she had once told her husband therefore any less true: that he alone had filled her whole life for her, because when his features were veiled by night, he represented many different characters to her—because in his arms she was the beloved of King Richard and Cyrano and Hamlet and all the others whose roles he played—the beloved of heroes and scoundrels, the blessed and the damned, the naïve and the sophisticated. In fact, in her early girlhood had she not wished to be the wife of the actor because union with him offered the only possibility for her to live the decorous life which her bourgeois upbringing had intended her for, and at the same time to lead the wild adventurous existence for which she longed in her secret dreams? And she remembered how she had taken Ferdinand not only against the wishes of her parents, whose pious bourgeois minds could not quite overcome a slight repugnance at the thought of the actor, even after her marriage had been consummated, but how she had won him besides from a much more dangerous enemy. For at the time when she met Ferdinand, he was in the midst of a liaison (which was no secret in the town) with a not very young but wealthy widow, who had assisted him greatly in his early days and who had often paid his debts. It was only lack of will power that kept him bound to her. It was then that Beatrice had made the romantic decision to free her hero from such unworthy bondage and to dissolve the ties of a relationship which, owing to its unstable foundation, was bound to break sooner or later, but which she feared might come too late for the good of the artist and his art. It was a never-to-be-forgotten occasion for her, and although she received a half insulting and joking refusal which she never forgot, and though it was a whole year till Ferdinand was really finally freed, still she could not doubt that that conversation was the first step towards the break. In fact her husband did the story full justice and boasted of it proudly even to people who were not in the least concerned.

Beatrice removed her hands from her eyes, and stood up in sudden passion. Almost twenty years lay between that madly bold adventure and the present—but had she become a different creature since then? Did she not dare to trust herself to steer the course of one who was so dear to her, as she saw fit? Was she the woman

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to stand humbly by, while her son's young life was being besmirched and broken, instead of acting as she had formerly acted with the other? She would go today to the Baroness, who after all was only a woman and must have somewhere, though it be in the nethermost corner of her soul, some understanding of the meaning of motherhood. And happy in her sudden decision, which came to her like a beam of light, she went to the window, opened the blinds, and full of new hope, she greeted as a good omen the charming landscape before her eyes. And she felt that she must carry out her sudden decision immediately, while her determination was fresh and strong. Without further hesitation, she went into her bedroom and rang for her maid, whom she bade be especially careful in helping her dress that day. As soon as this was done to her satisfaction, she put on her broad-brimmed panama hat with its narrow black band, over her dark-blond, thickly waved hair, chose the freshest of three red roses from a vase on her night table, slipped it into her white leather belt, took her slender mountain cane in her hand, and left the house. She felt young, happy, and sure of the outcome of her mission.

As she stepped out of the door, she saw Herr and Frau Arbesbacher at the garden gate. He was in a waterproof shooting jacket and leather breeches; she wore a dark flowered cotton gown which, in style and cut, was too matronly for her rather careworn but still youngish face.

"Greetings, Frau Heinold," called out the architect, raising his green Tyrolean hat with its cockade of goat's hair, and holding it in his hand so that his white head remained uncovered for a moment. "We have just come to call for you." And to her inquiring look: "Have you forgotten that today is Thursday, the day of the tarock party at the Director's?"

"Yes, that is so," said Beatrice, remembering.

"We just met your son," remarked Frau Arbesbacher, and over her faded features passed a tired smile.

"He went up that way, with two thick books under his arm," finished the architect, pointing to the path which led over the sunny meadow, upwards toward the wood. "An industrious boy!"

Beatrice smiled in unrestrained happiness. "Next year he will finish the 'gymnasium,'" she said.

"How pretty Frau Heinold looks today," remarked Frau Arbesbacher naïvely, in a voice that was almost humble with surprise.

"Yes, how are we going to feel, Frau Beatelinde, when we suddenly find we have a grown son who fights duels and turns the heads of the women?"

"But did you fight duels?" interrupted his wife.

"Oh, well, I've had my little battles. Those things come of themselves. You get into trouble either way."

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They walked along the road, which with its splendid view of the lake, led up past the town to the villa of Herr Welponer, Bank Director.

"Well—here I seem to be going along with you, when instead I should go down to the village first—to the post-office—in regard to a package which was sent from Vienna a week ago, and has not yet arrived. And it was sent special delivery too," she added naturally, as if she believed the story which she had so suddenly invented, she knew not why.

"Perhaps it will come on this train—your package," said Frau Arbesbacher, pointing down below where the little train came puffing pompously from behind the cliffs, up to the station which was slightly elevated from the meadow land. Travelers put their heads out of the windows, and Herr Arbesbacher waved his hat.

"What are you doing?" asked his wife.

"There are surely friends of ours among them and one must be polite."

"Well, then, auf Wiedersehen," said Beatrice suddenly. "I'll come up directly, of course. Take them my greetings in the meantime."

She departed quickly and went down the road she had just ascended. She felt that the architect and his wife, who had remained standing on the road, followed her with their eyes almost to the villa which Arbesbacher had built for his friend and hunting companion, Ferdinand Heinold.

Here Beatrice took the narrow wagon road which led steeply past unassuming country houses to the town, but she had to wait before crossing the tracks, for the train was just leaving the station. Now she realized that she really had nothing to do at the post-office, but had much more important work—to speak with the Baroness. But now that she knew her son was in the woods with his books, that did not seem so pressing as it had seemed an hour earlier. She crossed the tracks to the station and found the usual excitement which follows the arrival of a train. The two busses from the Lake Hotel and the Posthof were just rumbling away with their passengers. Other arrivals, high-voiced and excited, followed by porters, and happy-go-lucky picnickers, crossed Beatrice's path. She watched in amusement a whole family, father, mother, three children, nurse, and maid, trying to get into one cab, together with trunks, satchels, bags, umbrellas, and canes, and a snapping little fox-terrier. From another cab, a young married couple—friends of the year before—waved to her with the irresistible good spirits of summer resorters. A young man in a light gray summer suit, a very new yellow leather bag in his hand, raised his straw hat to Beatrice. She did not recognize him and greeted him coolly.

"How do you do, Frau Heinold," said the stranger, shifting his bag from one hand to the other and awkwardly offering Beatrice

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his free right one.

"Why, Fritzl!" cried Beatrice, suddenly recognizing him.

"Certainly, Frau Heinold, it's I—Fritzl himself!"

"Do you know—I really did not know you. You've become quite a dandy."

"Well, that's not so bad, is it?" answered Fritz, changing his bag back again to the other hand. "But didn't Hugo receive my card?"

"I don't know, but he told me recently that he was expecting you."

"Naturally, it was arranged in Vienna that I should come here for a few days from Ischl. But yesterday I wrote expressly that I expected to arrive this afternoon."

"In any case, he will be very happy. Where are you staying, Herr Weber?"

"No, no, please, Frau Heinold—don't say Herr Weber."

"Well then, where—Herr—Fritz?"

"I sent my trunk on in advance to the Posthof, but as soon as I have seen to my affairs, I shall be free to make my headquarters at the Villa Beatrice."

"Villa Beatrice? There is no villa by that name here."

"But what else can it be called when a person with such a charming name lives in it?"

"It has no name—I don't like such things—No. 7 Oak Road is its name—see—there it is—up there—with the green balcony—"

Fritz Weber looked thoughtfully in the direction designated. "The view must be delightful— But I shall not stop longer now. In an hour I shall find Hugo at home I hope?"

"I believe so. Just now he is in the woods studying."

"Studying, is he? Well, we shall have to cure him of that habit as soon as possible."

"Oho!"

"You see, I want to take trips with him. Do you know that I climbed the Dachstein recently?"

"Unfortunately not, Herr Weber. It was really not in the newspapers."

"But please—not Herr Weber."

"I'm afraid it shall have to be that since I'm neither your aunt nor governess."

"An aunt like you might not be a bad thing to have."

"Dear me, what a gallant gentleman he is—and at his age too." She laughed aloud; and instead of the well-dressed young man, the boy suddenly stood before her, the child whom she had known since he was twelve; and his little blond mustache looked as if it were pasted to his lip.

"Well, then, auf Wiedersehen, Fritzl," she said, holding out her hand. "This evening at supper you'll tell us about your Dachstein party, won't you?"

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Fritz bowed a trifle stiffly, then kissed Beatrice's hand, which she allowed as if in submission to the quick, passing of time. Then he went away with heightened self-respect, which was evident from his carriage and walk. "And he," thought Beatrice, "he is the friend of my Hugo. Of course he is a bit older—about a year and a half or two, at least. He was always in a higher class than Hugo at school," Beatrice remembered, "and he had to repeat one year." In any case, she was glad that he was there and expected to go on excursions with Hugo—if she could only send the two boys immediately on a two weeks' walking tour! Ten hours' walking a day, with the mountain wind blowing through one's hair—evenings to fall exhausted on a straw pallet, and in the morning to start again with the sun! How excellent and wholesome that was! She was tempted to go with them. But that would not do. The boys would not wish to have an aunt or governess with them. She sighed gently and passed her hand over her forehead.

She walked down the street which ran along the lake. The little steamboat had just left the landing and was floating sprucely and brightly across the water toward the place known as Grassy Meadow, where a few quiet houses lay almost hidden under the chestnut and fruit trees, and where it was already almost dark. On the diving-board over the swimming pool, a lonely figure in a white bath-robe bobbed up and down. There were still some swimmers in the lake. "They are enjoying themselves more than I," thought Beatrice, looking enviously at the water from which came a cool peace-bringing breath. But she quickly turned the temptation from her, and in firm determination continued on her way, until she unexpectedly found herself before the villa where Baroness Fortunata was living this summer. Through the commonplace garden of bright mallow and gillyflowers, she could see the veranda extending all along the front of the house and she caught the shimmer of white dresses shining through. Her eyes fixed straight ahead, Beatrice walked on past the white fence. To her shame, she felt her heart beating wildly. The sound of women's voices came to her ear. Beatrice hastened her steps and suddenly found herself beyond the house. She decided to go first to the village grocery, where she usually had some purchases to make, and especially today, as she expected a guest for supper. In a few minutes she was in Anton Meissenbichler's shop, had bought cold meat, fruit, and cheese, and had given little Lisle the package and a tip with instructions to deliver it at once to Oak Road. "And now what?" she asked herself as she stood outside in the church square, facing the open cemetery gate, where the gilded crosses glimmered reddish in the afternoon sunlight. Should she let her plans fall through merely because her heart had begun to beat faster? Never should she be able to forgive such weakness. And the punishment of fate—she felt it—would be upon her. Then there was nothing left to do, but to go

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back—and without further delay—back to the Baroness.

In a few moments Beatrice was down at the lake shore. Now she passed by the Lake Hotel on whose high terrace guests sat drinking coffee or ices, then past two huge modern villas that she detested—and two seconds later her eyes met those of the Baroness who lay on the veranda on a chaise-longue under a white sun-shade trimmed in red. Leaning against the wall, stood another woman, like a statue, with an ivory yellow face, in a billowy white dress. Fortunata had been speaking gayly, but now she was suddenly silent, and her features hardened. But her look immediately softened again, and she broke into a smile of greeting that glowed with genuine friendliness and welcome. “You jade,” thought Beatrice, a bit indignant at her own expression. And she girded herself for the struggle. Fortunata’s voice rang too happy in her ears. “How do you do, Frau Heinold.”

“How do you do,” answered Beatrice in a voice that could scarcely be heard, and as if she cared little whether her greeting reached the veranda or not. Then she pretended to go on.

“Apparently you are out for a sun and dust bath today, Frau Heinold.” Beatrice did not doubt that Fortunata had only said this in order to start a conversation with her. For the friendship between these two was so superficial, that the joking tone did not seem particularly in place. Many years ago Beatrice had met the young actress, Fortunata Schon, a colleague of Ferdinand’s, at a theatre party, and in the good fellowship of that festive evening the young couple had sat at the same table with her and her lover of that time, and had had supper and drunk champagne together. Later, there had been fleeting meetings in the theatre or on the street, but these had never led to real conversation even of a moment’s duration. Eight years ago, after her marriage to the Baron, Fortunata had left the stage and disappeared from Beatrice’s vision until she had met her accidentally, here at the watering place a few weeks ago; and after that meeting, since she could hardly avoid it, she had exchanged a few words with her on the street, in the woods, or while bathing. But today it pleased Beatrice that the Baroness herself seemed disposed to start a conversation and so she answered as indifferently as possible:

“A sun bath?—The sun has already set, and in the evening it’s not as sultry near the lake as up above in the wood.”

Fortunata had stood up; she leaned her slender well-formed little figure over the railing and answered quickly that for her part she preferred walks in the wood and that she found especially the one to the Hermitage quite impressive.

“What a stupid word,” thought Beatrice, and asked politely why the Baroness had not taken a villa at the edge of the forest since she preferred it.

The Baroness explained that she, or rather her husband, had

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rented the house from an advertisement, and that besides, she was quite well satisfied in every respect. "But why not end your walk, and drink a cup of tea with me and my friend?" And without awaiting an answer, she went toward Beatrice, gave her a smooth, white, somewhat restless hand, and led her with exaggerated friendliness to the veranda, where in the meantime, the other woman still leaned motionless against the wall in her billowy white muslin dress, in a sort of gloomy seriousness, that struck Beatrice as half sinister, half ridiculous. Fortunata presented her: "Fräulein Wilhelmine Fallehn—Frau Beatrice Heinold. You must know the name, dear Willy."

"I had the greatest regard for your husband," said Fräulein Fallehn, coolly and in a dark voice.

Fortunata offered Beatrice an upholstered wicker chair, and apologized as she stretched herself out again as comfortably as before. Never had she felt so tired and languid as here, especially in the afternoons. Most probably it was because she could not stand the experiment she was making of bathing twice a day and remaining in the water an hour each time. But when one knew so many waters as she—inland lakes, and rivers, and seas—one must finally discover that each water had its own definite character. So she continued, carefully and too elegantly as it seemed to Beatrice, while she stroked her red-dyed hair with one hand. Her long white dress, trimmed with crocheted lace, hung down over both sides of the low chair to the floor. Around her bare neck she wore a modest string of small pearls. Her pale narrow face was heavily powdered; only the tip of her nose showed pink, and her frankly painted lips were a dark red. Beatrice could not help thinking of a picture in an illustrated magazine, representing a Pierrot hanging on a lamp-post, an impression that was strengthened by the fact that Fortunata kept her eyes half closed while she spoke.

Tea and pastry were served and the conversation continued, with Wilhelmine Fallehn, who now leaned over the railing, her cup in her hand, joining in the talk even more informally than before. The subject changed from summer to winter; they spoke of the city, of the theatre, of the stupid disciples of Ferdinand Heinold, and about his unfortunate and premature death. Wilhelmine expressed in measured tones her surprise that a woman could survive the loss of such a husband, whereupon the Baroness, noticing Beatrice's surprise, smoothly remarked: "You must know, Willy, Frau Heinold has a son."

At that moment Beatrice looked at her with unbridled hostility in her eyes and she returned the look with the wicked slyness of a malicious water-sprite; in fact Beatrice imagined that Fortunata exhaled a damp breath like that from reeds or water-lilies. At the same time, she noticed that Fortunata's feet were bare in their sandals and that under her white linen dress she had nothing else on.

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In the meantime the Baroness continued speaking, incessantly, in her smooth and well-bred manner. She believed that life was stronger than death, and that therefore it must always win out in the end. But Beatrice felt that this was a creature who had never loved a soul, man or woman.

Wilhelmine Fallehn suddenly put down her cup. "I must finish packing," she explained, said a curt farewell, and disappeared through the sun-porch.

"You see, my friend is going back to Vienna today," said Fortunata. "She is engaged—so to speak."

"Ah," said Beatrice politely.

"What would you take her for?" asked Fortunata with half-closed eyes.

"She is evidently an actress."

Fortunata shook her head. "She was in the theatre for a while. She is the daughter of a high official. Or rather—an orphan. Her father put a bullet through his head in grief over the life she was leading. That was ten years ago. Now she is twenty-seven. She can still go far—Will you have another cup of tea?"

"No thank you, Baroness." She took a deep breath. Now the moment had come. Her face suddenly became so determined that Fortunata unconsciously half sat up. And Beatrice began with decision: "It is really not an accident that I was passing by your house today. I have something to say to you, Baroness."

"Oh," said Fortunata; and a faint red showed under the powdered Pierrot face. She threw one arm over the back of the chaise-longue and twisted her restless fingers.

"Please allow me to be very brief," began Beatrice.

"Just as you wish. As brief or as lengthy as you like, dear Frau Heinold."

Beatrice was provoked at these rather condescending words and said sharply: "To put it simply and briefly, it is this: Baroness, I do not wish my son to become your lover."

She was very calm; yes, exactly so had she felt when, nineteen years before, she had taken her future husband from the elderly widow.

The Baroness returned Beatrice's look no less calmly. "Oh," she said, half to herself, "you do not wish it? What a pity—Really, to tell the truth, I had not yet thought of it myself."

"Then it will be all the easier for you to grant my wish," answered Beatrice, a bit more heatedly.

"Certainly, if it depends on me alone."

"Baroness, it depends only on you. You know that very well. My son is still only a child."

A look of pain appeared around Fortunata's painted lips. "What a terrible woman I must be," she said thoughtfully. "Shall I tell you why my friend is leaving? She had intended to spend the

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whole summer with me—and her fiancé was to have visited her here. And imagine—suddenly she became frightened. Afraid of me. Yes, perhaps she is right. That is how I am. I cannot answer for myself.”

Beatrice sat motionless. She had not expected such frankness that was almost shamelessness. And she answered biting, “Then, Baroness, since you feel that way, it will mean very little to you to—”

Fortunata rested her childish glance on Beatrice. “What you are doing, Frau Heinold,” she said in a quiet new-found voice, “is touching indeed. But clever, on my soul, it is not. Besides, I repeat that I had not even entertained the thought. In truth, Frau Heinold, I believe that women like you have no conception of women—of my kind. Look here—two years ago, for example, I spent three whole months in a Dutch fishing village—quite alone. And I believe I was never so happy in my whole life. And so it could have happened that this summer too—Oh, I want to think it possible—I never have schemed—never in my life. Even my marriage, I assure you, was a matter of pure chance.” And she looked up as if a sudden thought had come to her. “Or perhaps you are afraid of the Baron—are you afraid that there may be some unpleasantness for—ah—for your son on that score? As far as that is concerned—” And she smilingly closed her eyes.

Beatrice shook her head. “I had really not thought of anything of the sort.”

“Still, one might think of such things. There’s no telling what husbands will do. But look you, Frau Heinold,” and she opened her eyes again, “if that question has really played no part, then it is all the more incomprehensible to me—Seriously—if I had a son of the same age as your Hugo—”

“You know his name?” asked Beatrice severely.

Fortunata smiled. “You told it to me yourself—recently at the pier.”

“Quite right. I beg your pardon, Baroness.”

“Well then, dear Frau Heinold, I wanted to say—that if I had a son and he were to fall in love with a woman like you, for example—I don’t know—but I think I could hardly picture a better debut for a young man.”

Beatrice moved in her chair, as if to stand up.

“We are just two women among ourselves,” said Fortunata soothingly.

“You have no son, Baroness—and then—” She stopped.

“Ah, yes, you mean that there would be another very great difference. But that difference would make the affair—for my son—even more dangerous. For you, Frau Heinold, would probably take such an affair seriously. But I, on the contrary—I—Really, Frau Heinold, the more I think about it, the more it seems to me, it would have been wiser of you to come to me with the opposite

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request—if you had brought your son, so to speak, to my very arms.”

“Baroness!” Beatrice was dumbfounded. She could have screamed.

Fortunata leaned back, crossed her arms under her head, and completely shut her eyes. “Such things do happen”—And she began to tell a story. “Many years ago, somewhere in the provinces, I had a friend, an actress, who was at that time about as old as I am now. She played the heroic-sentimental roles. One day a countess came to her—the name does not concern us—You see, her son, the young count, had fallen in love with a girl of the middle classes, of good but rather poor family—civil service, or something of the sort. And the young count wanted to marry the girl at once. Besides, he was under twenty. And the countess—do you know what that clever woman did? One fine day she appeared before my friend and spoke with her, and asked her—Well, to make it short—she arranged it so that her son forgot the girl in the arms of my friend and—”

“I beg you, Baroness, to desist from such anecdotes.”

“It is not an anecdote. It is a true story and a very moral one besides. A *mésalliance* was prevented, and an unhappy marriage, perhaps a suicide, or a double suicide.”

“That may be,” said Beatrice, “but all that does not concern us. In any case, I am different from the countess. And for me, the thought is simply unbearable—unbearable—”

Fortunata smiled and was silent for a while, as if she wished to force an end to the sentence. Then she said, “Your son is sixteen—or seventeen?”

“Seventeen,” answered Beatrice and was immediately angry with herself for having given the information so meekly.

Fortunata half closed her eyes, as if she were seeing a vision. And she said as if out of a dream, “Then you must get used to the thought. If it is not I, it will be another—and who can tell you”—(out of the suddenly opened eyes came a green flash)—“that it will be a better one?”

“Will you have the kindness, Baroness,” answered Beatrice with labored superiority, “to leave that problem to me?”

Fortunata sighed softly. Suddenly she seemed tired and said, “Well, then, why talk of it any more? I am willing to be agreeable. Your son has nothing to fear from me—or as we might also put it—to hope—if you are not”—and now her eyes were large, gray, and clear—“entirely on the wrong track, Frau Heinold. For I—honestly, till now I had never thought that I had made any particular impression on Hugo.” She let the name slip slowly out of her mouth. And she looked innocently into Beatrice’s face. Beatrice had blushed darkly, and speechlessly pressed her lips together. “Then what shall I do?” asked Fortunata pitifully. “Go away? I could write my

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husband that the air here does not agree with me. What do you think, Frau Heinold?"

Beatrice shrugged her shoulders. "If you really are willing, I mean if you will really have the kindness not to concern yourself with my son, it will not be so very hard, Baroness—your word will suffice."

"My word? Don't you think, Frau Heinold, that in such affairs words and oaths—oh, even of women different from myself—mean very little?"

"You do not love him at all," Beatrice suddenly cried, losing all her self-control. "It would have been a whim, no more. And I am his mother. Baroness, you will not permit me to have made this step in vain."

Fortunata stood up, looked long at Beatrice, and offered her hand. She seemed suddenly to admit defeat. "Your son, from this hour, does not exist for me," she said earnestly. "Forgive me for having caused you to wait so long for this self-evident answer."

Beatrice took her hand and at that moment felt a sort of sympathy, even of pity for the Baroness. She almost felt as if she owed her an apology. But she restrained this impulse, even avoided saying anything that might be taken as thanks, and said instead, rather lamely, "Then the affair is in order, Baroness." And she stood up.

"Must you go?" asked Fortunata in her most proper voice.

"I have detained you long enough," answered Beatrice equally politely.

Fortunata smiled and Beatrice felt rather stupid. She allowed the Baroness to accompany her to the garden-gate, and gave her her hand once more. "Thank you for your visit," said Fortunata cordially and added, "If I shall not be able to return it in the near future, I hope you will not take it amiss."

"Oh," said Beatrice and returned again from the street the friendly nod of the Baroness who remained standing at the gate. Involuntarily Beatrice walked more rapidly than usual and kept to the level road. She could turn off later to the narrow forest path that led steep and straight to the Director's villa. "How do matters really stand?" she asked herself excitedly. "Am I the victor? She gave me her word. Yes. But did she not herself say that the promises of women did not mean much? No, she will not dare. She has seen to what lengths I can go." Fortunata's words kept ringing in her ears. How queerly she spoke of that summer in Holland! As if of a peaceful respite from a wildly sweet, but very difficult time. And she imagined Fortunata in a white linen dress over her naked body, running along the seashore, as if pursued by evil spirits. Perhaps it was not always pleasant, the life that was Fortunata's lot. In a way, as was the case with women of her sort, she was probably half-insane and hardly answerable for the harm that she did. Well, she could do what she wished, only she must leave Hugo in peace.

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Why did it have to be just he? And Beatrice smiled as she thought that she could have offered the Baroness as compensation a handsome young man, newly arrived, named Fritz Weber, with whom she would surely be just as well satisfied. Yes, she should have made the proposal. Truly, that would have put the proper spice into the conversation. What women there were! What a life they led! So that they had to go to Dutch fishing villages from time to time to recuperate. For others all life was just such a fishing village. And Beatrice smiled, but without real joy.

She stood before the gate of Welponer's villa and entered. From the tennis court which was quite near the entrance, Beatrice could see white figures shimmering through the thin shrubbery and could hear familiar voices. As she came closer, she saw two couples standing facing each other. On one side stood the son and daughter of the house, nineteen and eighteen years of age, both resembling their father in their dark eyes and heavy brows, and betraying by features and bearing, the Italian-Jewish stock from which they came. On the other side played Dr. Bertram and his slender little sister, Leonie, the children of a well-known physician, who also had a home in the vicinity. At first Beatrice stood off a little to enjoy the strong free movement of their young bodies and the sharp flight of the balls. The fresh grace of the battle refreshed and pleased her. In a few moments the set was ended. Both couples met at the net, racquets in hand, and stood there, chatting. Their features, earlier made tense by the excitement of the game, now melted into vacuous smiles; their eyes, which before had followed the spring of the balls so keenly, now met dreamily. Beatrice realized this with strange uneasiness: it was as if the atmosphere, formerly so clean and pure, had suddenly become stormy and misty, and she could not help thinking: "How well this evening would end if suddenly, by some magic, all the inhibitions of society should be done away with, and these young people might follow without hindrance the secret, perhaps even unsuspected urge which impels them." And suddenly she realized that there was a lawless world—that she had just stepped out of just such a one, and that its breath still hung around her. It was only because of that, that she saw today what otherwise would have escaped her innocent eyes. Only because of that?—Had she not herself secretly desired these worlds? Was she not herself once the beloved of the blessed and the damned, the naïve and the sophisticated, of scoundrels and heroes?

She was seen. They waved their hands to her in greeting. She went closer to the wire netting and the others walked towards her. She heard their light chatter around her. But she felt as if both young men looked at her in a new way. Especially young Dr. Bertram had a sort of superior scorn about his mouth and looked her up and down as he had never done before, or at least in a way that

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she had never before noticed. And when she left them to go at last up to the house, he jokingly caught her finger through the net and kissed it long, as if he could never stop. And he laughed insolently as a dark look of displeasure appeared on her face.

Up above, on the roofed, almost too handsome balcony, Beatrice found both couples, the Welponers and the Arbesbachers, playing tarock. She would not let them be disturbed, pushed the Director back into his chair when he tried to lay aside his cards, and then sat down between him and his wife. She said she wanted to look on at their game, but she hardly did—her glance soon wandered over the stone balustrade far over the hills which the sun was gilding. Here a feeling of security and fitness came over her that she had not felt out there among the young people—a feeling that rendered her calm, but at the same time sad. The Director's wife offered her tea in her rather condescending manner to which one had to become accustomed. But Beatrice thanked her: she had just had some. Just! How many miles away lay that house with its insolently fluttering flag? How many hours, or days ago, had she left that place for this? Shadows sank upon the park, the sun suddenly disappeared behind the mountains; from the street below, invisible from here, came indefinite sounds. Beatrice suddenly felt so alone as she had only felt in twilight hours in the country immediately after Ferdinand's death and never since. Even Hugo seemed suddenly to disappear into unreality and to be unattainably far away. She wanted him urgently and hastily took her leave of the party. The Director insisted on accompanying her. He went down the broad staircase with her, then along the pond, in the center of which the fountain was now silent, then past the tennis court where the two couples, in spite of the falling evening, still played so eagerly that they did not notice them as they went by. Herr Welponer threw a troubled look towards them, which Beatrice had noticed on his face before. But she felt that today she understood him for the first time. She knew that in the midst of the strenuous powerful life of a keen financier, the Director was disturbed by the melancholy fear of advancing age. And while he walked at her side, his tall figure bent forward slightly as if only in affectation, and while he conversed lightly with her about the wonderful summer weather, and about the excursions which they really must undertake, but for which the energy always failed them, Beatrice felt that they were both being enmeshed in an invisible net. And when he kissed her hand at the gate of the park, he left a feeling of gentle sadness upon her, that accompanied her all the way home.

At the door, the maid told her that Hugo and another young man were in the garden, and besides, that a package had been left by the postman. Beatrice found it in her room, and smiled with pleasure. Was it not a good omen that fate had made the truth out of her unnecessary small lie? Or should it be taken as a warning:

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this time you were lucky. The package was from Dr. Teichmann. It contained books that he had promised to send her, the memoirs and letters of great statesmen, of people, therefore, whom the little lawyer tremendously admired. Beatrice merely looked at a title page, took off her hat in her bedroom, threw a shawl around her shoulders and went into the garden. She saw the boys below near the hedge. Without noticing her, they continued to jump high up in the air like madmen. When Beatrice came nearer, she saw that both had taken off their coats. Now Hugo ran towards her and kissed her for the first time in weeks, childishly and stormily on both cheeks. Fritz quickly slipped his coat on, bowed, and kissed Beatrice's hand. She smiled. It seemed to her that he wanted to wipe away that other melancholy kiss by the touch of his young lips.

"What are you children doing there?" asked Beatrice.

"Contest for the world's championship in high-jumping," explained Fritz.

The high cornstalks on the other side of the hedge moved in the evening breeze. Below lay the lake, dull gray and misty. "You might put on your coat too, Hugo," said Beatrice, gently pushing his damp blond hair off his forehead. Hugo obeyed. Beatrice thought that her boy looked rather unkempt and childish next to his friend, but it pleased her at the moment.

"Just think, Mother," said Hugo, "Fritz wants to take the half-past nine train back to Ischl."

"But why?"

"There are no rooms to be found, Frau Heinold. There may be one in two or three days at the earliest."

"But you are not going away just because of that, Herr Fritz? We have room for you."

"I have already told him, Mother, that you certainly would not object to his staying."

"Why should I? Certainly you shall spend the night here, in the guest room. What is it for, if not for just such occasions?"

"Frau Heinold, I shouldn't like to inconvenience you in any way. I know that my mother is always much upset when we have unexpected house guests in Ischl."

"Well, that is not the case here, Herr Fritz."

They finally agreed that Herr Weber's baggage should be sent for from the Posthof where it had been checked, and that he should live from that time on in the attic bedroom, in exchange for which Beatrice solemnly promised to call him plain "Fritz" without the "Herr."

Beatrice gave the necessary orders in the house, and feeling it more fitting that the young friends be left to themselves for a while, did not appear until supper was served on the sun-porch. For the first time in many days, Hugo was in the best of spirits, and Fritz,

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too, had given up playing the grown-up man. Two school boys sat at the table, and as usual began first to criticize all their teachers, and then to discuss the outlook for their last year in school and plans for the more distant future. Fritz Weber, who wanted to be a physician, had already visited the dissecting room one day last winter, and he implied that no-one else could have had such impressive experiences as he. Hugo, for his part, had long ago decided to dedicate his life to archaeology. He already had a small collection of relics—a Pompeian lamp, a piece of mosaic from the Baths of Caracalla, a pistol lock from the French invasion, and a few other things. He was planning to excavate here at the lake shore, and of course, over in Grassy Meadow where the remains of lake dwellings had been found. Fritz did not conceal his suspicions as to the authenticity of Hugo's museum pieces—above all he had always been doubtful of the pistol lock which Hugo had found in the Turkish entrenchments. Beatrice said that Fritz was too young for such scepticism, whereupon he answered that it had nothing to do with age—it was just his natural tendency. "I prefer my Hugo to this precocious cub," thought Beatrice, "but in truth, life will be much more difficult for him." She looked at him. His eyes were staring far off into the distance, whither Fritz surely could not follow him. Beatrice thought further: "Naturally he has no suspicion as to the kind of person this Fortunata really is. Who knows what he imagines about her? Perhaps to him she is a sort of fairy princess whom a cruel wizard holds in captivity. How he sits there, with his mussed blond hair and his untidy neck-tie! He still has the child's mouth—the sweet red child's mouth—It is his father's—the same mouth and eyes." And she looked out into the darkness that hung so heavy and black over the meadow that it seemed as if a deep forest stood around the windows.

"May I smoke?" asked Fritz. Beatrice nodded, whereupon Fritz took out a silver cigarette case with a golden monogram and offered it politely to his hostess. Beatrice took a cigarette and let him light it for her, and was informed that Fritz got his tobacco directly from Alexandria. Hugo smoked today too. It was, he said, the seventh cigarette of his life. Fritz had given up counting his long ago. Besides, he announced that these cigarettes were given him by his father, who, he said, had excellent business prospects for the next year. Then he told the latest news—that his sister was going to finish her "gymnasium" in three years, and then would probably study medicine just as he himself was going to do. Beatrice glanced quickly at Hugo, who blushed slightly. Was it perhaps still the love for little Elise that he had in his heart, and which caused the painful look about his mouth?

"Couldn't we go for a little row?" asked Fritz. "It's such a beautiful night, and so warm."

"Why not wait for moonlight," said Beatrice. "It's gloomy,

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floating around out there on such a dark night.”

“I think so too,” said Hugo. Fritz’s nostrils twitched contemptuously. But then the boys decided to celebrate the day by having an ice on the terrace of the Lake Hotel.

“You young scamps,” said Beatrice smilingly as they left.

Then she looked over the attic room to see that everything was in order, and attended to all her final housewifely duties before going to bed. She went to her room, undressed, and lay down in bed. Soon she heard voices outside—evidently those of the porters who were bringing Fritz’s trunk, which was now being carried up the wooden steps. Then followed a conversation between the porter and maid that lasted longer than was absolutely necessary—and then—all was silent. Beatrice took up one of the books of heroes that Dr. Teichmann had sent her and began to read the memoirs of a French general. But her mind was not on it—she was restless and tired, and she felt as if the very stillness around would not let her sleep. After some time she heard the front door open, then footsteps, whispering, and laughter. The boys! They tiptoed upstairs as quietly as possible. Then from above came sounds of movement, a clatter, a murmur—then footsteps descending the stairs. That was Hugo going down to bed. Now all was quiet in the house. Beatrice put aside her book, turned out the light, and fell asleep, calm, and almost happy.

PART TWO

THEY had finally reached their goal, As all had prophesied, the journey lasted longer than the architect had said. But he countered with: “Well, what’d I say? Three hours from Oak Road. It’s not my fault if we started at nine instead of eight.”

“But now it’s half past one,” remarked Fritz.

“Yes,” said Frau Arbesbacher sadly, “that’s always how he measures time.”

“When there are women about,” answered her husband, “you always have to add fifty per cent. It’s an old, old story, especially when you go shopping with them.” And he laughed dully.

Young Dr. Bertram, who since the beginning of the excursion had steadily kept near Beatrice, spread his green coat out on the grass. “Please, Frau Heinold,” he said, pointing to it with a gentle smile. His words and looks had been full of meaning ever since the day two weeks ago, when he had kissed her finger through the tennis net.

“No, thanks,” answered Beatrice, “I have my own, you see.” And at a glance from her, Fritz flung open her Scotch plaid, which he had been carrying on his arm. But the wind was so strong up there on the mountain side, that the blanket flapped like a giant

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veil until Beatrice caught it at the other end, and with Fritz's help, spread it out on the ground.

"There's always a nice little breeze blowing up here," said the architect. "But what a pretty sight, eh what?" And he made a sweeping gesture over the whole landscape. They were on a broad, closely cropped meadow that sloped gently and left the view free on all sides. All of them contemplated the scene for some time in silent pleasure. The men had taken off their waterproof hats. Hugo's hair was more untidy than ever, the bristling white hair of the architect was stirred too by the wind, even Fritz's well combed crop underwent some damage, and it was only Bertram's straight blond hair that the wind could not disturb, though it blew so steadily over the height. Arbesbacher named several of the mountain peaks across the lake together with their respective heights, and pointed out one peak which, he said, had never been reached from the north. Dr. Bertram said this was a mistake, for he himself had climbed it last year.

"Then you were the first," said the architect.

"That's possible," answered Bertram, nonchalantly, and called attention immediately to another mountain that looked much less formidable, but that he had never dared climb. He knew just how much he dar

ed attempt. Above all, he was not foolhardy, and had no especial fondness for death. He pronounced the word "death" very lightly, in the voice of the expert who disdains to speak seriously of his specialty before the layman.

Beatrice had stretched out on the plaid and looked up at the dull, blue sky over which thin white summer clouds were passing. She knew that Dr. Bertram was speaking only to her—that he was placing at her disposal all his most interesting qualities—pride and knowledge, contempt of death, and love of life—to choose from as she would. But it had not the slightest effect on her.

The youngest members of the party—Fritz and Hugo—had brought the lunch in their packs. Leonie helped them unpack and then buttered the bread in her graceful motherly way, not forgetting to take off her tan gloves and to slip them into her brown leather belt. The architect uncorked the bottles, Dr. Bertram poured the wine and offered the full glasses to the ladies, looking past Beatrice with deliberate indifference, towards the mountain tops across the lake. They all found it delightful to be partaking of bread and butter sandwiches and tangy Terlan wine up there, with the mountain wind blowing around them. To finish off the lunch, there was a large cake that Frau Director Welponer had sent to Beatrice that morning, together with an apology for herself and her family, because they were unable to join them, although they should have enjoyed it so much. Their refusal was not unexpected. To pry the Welponer family loose from their garden was no easy

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task, as Leonie said. The architect took the liberty of reminding the honorable ones present that they too could not boast much of their enterprise. How had they been spending these beautiful summer days?—"lackadaisied," as he put it, around on the forest paths, or bathed in the lake, or played tennis and tarock—but how many plans and preparations had been necessary before they finally decided to undertake even this little excursion—which, all told, was but a short walk?

Beatrice thought to herself that she had only been here once before—with Ferdinand—ten years ago—the same summer, therefore, when they had moved into their new home. But it was hard to realize that it was the same meadow where she was today;—in her memory it had been so different—so much broader and lighter. A soft melancholy crept into her heart. How alone she was amongst all these people! What did the happy chatter all around mean to her? There they all sat on the meadow, letting their glasses clink! Fritz touched his glass to Beatrice's; but after she had long emptied hers, he still stood motionlessly holding his in his hand and staring at her. "What a look," thought Beatrice. "Even more enraptured and thirsty than those that he has been directing towards me for the past few days—or do I just imagine it, because I have drunk three glasses of wine in such quick succession?" She stretched out again on her plaid beside Frau Arbesbacher, who had fallen fast asleep, and looked blinkingly into the air, where she saw a tiny smoke cloud rising gracefully—probably from Bertram's cigarette, though she could not see him. But she felt his glance running along the whole length of her body to the nape of her neck, until she almost thought she felt his touch, but realized that it was only the long grass that was tickling her.

The voice of the architect came to her as if from a great distance, as he told the boys of the time when the little train did not yet come to the village below. And although hardly fifteen years had gone by, he tried to spread an atmosphere of gray antiquity over that period. Among other stories, he told one of a drunken coachman who had once driven him right into the lake and whom he had thrashed almost to death for it. Then Fritz related the following heroic anecdote in his best manner: once in the Wiener Wald, he had made a very timid boy take to his heels by merely putting his hand into his pocket as if he had a revolver there. For it was a question, as he enlighteningly explained, not of the revolver, but of presence-of-mind. "It's a pity," said the architect, "that one does not always have a six-barreled, loaded presence-of-mind about one." The boys laughed. How well Beatrice knew that laugh, that double laugh, that she could now enjoy so often at home during meal times and in her garden; and how happy she was that the boys got along so well together! Recently they had gone away together for two days, fully equipped, on an excursion to Gosau-

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seen, as a preparation for the September tour that they were planning. Besides, they had been better friends in Vienna than Beatrice had known. She had learned from others something that Hugo had stubbornly kept silent—that some evenings, after an hour in the gymnasium, both would go to a coffee house on the other side of the village to play billiards. But in any case, she was deeply grateful to Fritz for coming to them at that time. Hugo's mood had become again as fresh and untroubled as ever, the painful look had left his face, and surely he did not think of the terrible woman with the Pierrot face and the red-dyed hair. And Beatrice could not deny that she had comported herself blamelessly. Just a few days ago she had by chance been standing near her on the gallery of the bath house, just when Hugo and Fritz had come racing in as usual from the open lake. They reached the slippery steps simultaneously and supporting themselves with one arm, they had splashed each other's faces, dived and appeared again far out in the open lake. Fortunata, in her white bathrobe, had looked on carelessly with an absent smile, as at the play of children, and then had looked again out over the lake with lost sad eyes, so that Beatrice in mild discontent, and with an almost guilty feeling, recalled the talk in the white-flagged villa, that was ever becoming dimmer and less important to her, and that the Baroness herself seemed to have long forgiven and forgotten. One evening Beatrice had seen the Baron seated on a bench in the wood. He evidently had come for a short visit. He had light blond hair, a beardless, wrinkled, and yet young looking face with steel gray eyes, wore a light blue flannel suit, smoked a short pipe, and had beside him on the bench, a sailor's cap. He looked to Beatrice like a captain who had come from a distant land, and who must immediately go back to sea. Fortunata sat beside him, small and well-bred, her nose pinkish as usual, with tired arms, like a doll that the distant captain could take out or put back into its case according to his pleasure.

All of this went through Beatrice's mind as she lay on the meadow while the wind blew and grass-blades tickled her neck. Around her now everything was silent; all of them seemed to be asleep; only at a short distance away somebody was whistling. Unconsciously Beatrice looked with blinking eyes for the small smoke cloud, and immediately saw it rising thin and silver-gray into the air. Beatrice raised her head slightly—she saw Dr. Bertram leaning his head on both arms, his eyes fastened on the low cut neck of her dress. He was speaking and it was quite possible that he had been speaking for a long time, in fact that his speech had awakened her out of her half-sleep. Now he asked her whether she would be interested in a mountain climbing party, in a real climb, or whether she were afraid of dizziness—it didn't have to be a peak, it could be a plateau as well; only he wanted to go higher than the others, so much higher, that they could not follow. To look with her from a

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high peak into the valley—that would be divine. When he got no answer, he said: “Well, Frau Beatrice?”

“I’m asleep,” answered Beatrice.

“Then allow me to be your dream,” he began and continued—he could picture no more beautiful death than to jump into the deep—one’s whole life would rush by in such frightful clearness, and it would naturally be more pleasant in proportion as to how one had lived, and if one had not the slightest fear, only a never before experienced thrill, and a sort—yes, a sort of metaphysical curiosity. And he buried his burned out cigarette stub in the ground with quick fingers. Besides, he continued, he was not particularly interested in such an end. On the contrary, even if he were obliged to see so much misery and horror in his work, for that reason, he treasured everything light and pure in life all the more. Wouldn’t Frau Beatrice like to see the hospital garden? There was a very curious and charming atmosphere about it, especially on autumn evenings. You see, he was now living in the hospital. And if Beatrice would like to take tea with him at the same time—

“You’re quite mad,” said Beatrice, sitting up and looking with clear eyes into the blue-gold atmosphere which the dull mountain-peaks seemed to absorb. Drunk with the sun, a little weak, she stood up, shook out her dress, and noticed, how, quite against her will, she looked wearily down at Dr. Bertram. She quickly looked away toward Leonie, who stood quite alone at some distance from them, like a picture, a fluttering veil thrown about her head. The architect sat with crossed legs on the grass, playing cards with the boys.

“I say, Frau Beatrice, soon you won’t have to give Hugo any more pocket money,” he called out, “he can support himself comfortably out of today’s winnings in tarock.”

“Then it would be wise for us to start homeward before you are completely ruined.” Fritz looked at Beatrice with glowing cheeks. She smiled at him. Bertram stood up, looked at the sky, and then down over her bit by bit. “What is the matter with you all?” she thought. “And what is the matter with me?” For suddenly she noticed that she allowed the lines of her body to play as alluringly as possible. Seeking assistance, she turned her look toward her son, who was playing out his last card, his childish face aglow, his clothes unspeakably untidy. He won the game and proudly collected one crown and twenty heller from the architect. They got ready for the descent, all except Frau Arbesbacher who was still asleep. “Let her lie,” joked the architect. But at that moment, she stirred, rubbed her eyes, and was ready for the homeward journey long before the others.

For a while the path led sharply downhill, then it ran almost level through young forests; at the next bend, they could see the lake which disappeared at once. Beatrice, who at first had joined

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Hugo and Fritz and had run ahead with them, soon remained behind; Leonie came up to her and spoke of a sailing regatta that was to take place soon. Beatrice still remembered clearly the race seven years ago in which Ferdinand had won second prize in his boat, "The Roxana." Where was she now? After so many triumphs she led a lonely inglorious life down there in the boat-house. The architect took advantage of this opportunity to say that this year boating was as much neglected as all other sports. Leonie expressed the opinion that there was some enervating influence coming from the Welponer house, whose effect no one could escape. The architect, too, believed that the Welponers were in no way suited to agreeable society, and his wife said it was due most of all to Frau Welponer's arrogance and because she had not the slightest need for amusement. They suddenly were silent, as they saw the Director sitting on a worm-eaten, broken down bench at the turn in the road. He stood up; and his monocle on its narrow silk ribbon hung down over his white pique vest. He said that he had taken the liberty of coming to meet them and invite them in the name of his wife to partake of a small "Jause," which was awaiting the tired wanderers on the shady veranda. At the same time, he looked wearily at them all, and Beatrice noted that when he looked at Bertram, his face darkened; and she suddenly knew that the Director was envious of the young man. But she was immediately ashamed of such a foolish assumption. She lived on in the present, quietly and unquestioningly, in undisturbed faithfulness to him alone whose voice even now rang clearer in her memory than all the voices of the living, and whose eyes still shone brighter than all those living ones.

The Director remained behind with Beatrice. First he talked of various unimportant events of the day, of some friends who had recently arrived, of the death of the miller, aged ninety-five, about the ugly house that a Salzburg architect was building in Grassy Meadow, and then, as if by accident, reminded her of the time when neither his house, nor the Heinold house had yet been built, and when both families had lived all summer in the Lake Hotel. He recalled several trips they had taken together on the then little known roads, and one sailing party in the "Roxana," which ended in a terrible storm; spoke of the housewarming party at the Heinold house when Ferdinand had made two of his fellow actors dead drunk, and finally, of Ferdinand's last role in a modern, rather tragic play, in which he had so perfectly played the part of a youth of twenty. What an inimitable artist he had been! And what an excellent man! A man of eternal youth, one might say. A wonderful contrast to that class of people in whose numbers he must unfortunately include himself, of people who were not made to bring either themselves or others happiness. And as Beatrice looked at him questioningly, he said: "I, dear Frau Beatrice, I was

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born old, so to speak. Do you know what that means? I shall try to explain. You see, we who were born old—during our lives we let one mask after another fall from us, until, at the age of eighty or thereabouts, sometimes sooner, we show our real faces to the world. The others, the youthful ones—and such a one was Ferdinand (quite contrary to his habit he called him by his Christian name) they always remain young, remain children, and therefore are obliged to put on one mask after another if they do not wish to astonish other people too much. Perhaps these masks come of themselves over their faces, and they do not know that they wear them, and only have a strange dark feeling that something does not fit in their lives—because they always feel young. Such a man was Ferdinand.”

Beatrice listened to the Director in surprise and with rising defiance. She could not help feeling that he had conjured up Ferdinand’s shadow intentionally, as if he had been assigned to guard her honor, to warn her of some near danger, and to protect her. Really, he might have spared himself the trouble. What gave him the right, what grounds had he for appointing himself the representative and guardian of Ferdinand’s memory? What was there in her actions that aroused such insulting suspicions in his mind? If she could play and laugh today and wear bright colors again, could any unprejudiced onlooker interpret it as anything but the necessity of living on in conformity with the others? But the thought that she might ever be really happy again, or might belong again to any man, filled her with disgust and horror; and that horror, as she learned in many sleepless nights, became only deeper, when some inexplicable flashes of longing rushed through her blood and passed by unfulfilled. And again she glanced quickly at the Director, who now walked silently beside her. But she was terrified to discover the smile on her lips, that in spite of herself, came from the depths of her soul, and that unerringly, almost shamelessly, said more plainly than words: “I know that you desire me, and I am glad.” She saw his eyes suddenly flare up into a burning question, which he immediately controlled and quieted. And he addressed an indifferent polite word to Frau Arbesbacher, who was just a few steps ahead of them, for the small party, now that they were nearing their goal, had all come together again. Suddenly young Dr. Bertram was at Beatrice’s side and by his bearing, look, and speech, implied that the relations between him and Beatrice had become more closely bound on this picnic, and that she must admit the fact that she was beginning to yield to his graces. But she remained cool and distant and grew more distant at each step. And when they reached the gate of Welponer’s Villa, she announced, to the surprise of every one, including herself, that she was tired and would prefer to go home. They tried to dissuade her. But since the Director himself expressed only mild disappointment, they did

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not insist. She was undecided as to whether she would return for supper, which they had agreed to take together at the Lake Hotel, but had no objections to Hugo's joining them in any case. "I'll take good care," said the architect, "that he does not drink himself silly." Beatrice took her leave. A feeling of great relief came over her as she took the road homewards and she was happy in the prospect of the few undisturbed hours that were to be hers.

At home she found a letter from Dr. Teichmann, and was mildly surprised, not so much that he again gave a sign of life, as that she had almost forgotten his existence in the excitement of the past days. It was only after she had removed the dust of the day's journey and was sitting before her toilet table in a comfortable house gown, that she opened the letter about whose contents she was not in the least bit curious. The letter opened, as usual, with reports on business matters, for Dr. Teichmann believed it his duty to serve Beatrice first of all as her solicitor, and he informed her with misplaced humor of the success of a little venture of hers in which he was able to gain quite a sum of money for her. Finally, he told her, in an elaborately casual tone, that his vacation journey that year would take him past Oak Road, and that he dared hope—as he wrote—that through the bushes he might catch sight of a gay garment, or that a friendly eye might smile at him and might invite him to linger, even though it be for just a moment's chat. He did not forget to send regards to the Arbesbachers and the "noble Lord and Lady of the castle, together with their worthy offspring," as he expressed it, and the other friends, whose acquaintance he had made last year when he spent three days at the Lake Hotel. Beatrice found it strange that last year seemed so far away and like a different period of her life, although it had been hardly any different from this summer. Even the flirtations on the part of the Director and young Dr. Bertram had not been wanting. It was only that she herself had gone on unperturbed amongst all their looks and words; yes, that she had hardly noticed them, and was only now conscious of them in reminiscence. This might be due to the fact that she had very little to do with all these summer acquaintances in the city. Since the death of her husband, after she had broken connections with the circle of artists and theatrical people, she had led a retiring and monotonous life. Only her mother, who lived in a suburb in an old mansion near the factory that her father had once managed, and a few distant relatives, found their way to her quiet home which had become quite bourgeois and commonplace again. And when Dr. Teichmann would appear for tea and a little chat, it meant a diversion to her, that gave her real pleasure, she realized now with surprise.

Thoughtfully shaking her head, she laid the letter down and looked into the garden over which the early August twilight was spreading. The comfortable feeling of solitude had gradually left

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her and she wondered whether it would not be wiser to go back to the Welponers, or later to go to the Lake Hotel. But then she restrained the impulse, a little ashamed that she should have succumbed so completely to the allurements of society and that the pensive magic of such solitary summer evenings that formerly had so charmed her, should have disappeared forever. She threw a thin shawl over her shoulders and went into the garden. Here the melancholy she had been seeking came over her, and she knew in the depths of her soul that she could never walk up and down these paths that she had so often walked with Ferdinand, on the arm of another man. At this moment, one thing above all was clear to her: if Ferdinand in those distant days had made her swear not to cast aside any opportunity for happiness, certainly he had not pictured a marriage with such a man as Dr. Teichmann; any passionate, though perhaps merely passing adventure would be much more likely to win his approval in his celestial realm. And with horror she realized that a picture had sprung up in her mind: she saw herself up on the meadow in the twilight in the arms of Dr. Bertram. But she merely saw the picture, no wish accompanied it; cool and distant, it hung in the air like a vision and disappeared.

She stood at the lower end of the garden, leaned her arms on the fence, and looked downwards to the lights of the town blinking below. The voices of an evening boating party, singing out on the lake, came to her with startling clearness through the quiet air. The clock in the church tower struck nine. Beatrice sighed softly, then turned around and slowly went back across the lawn to the house. On the veranda, she found the table set with the usual three places. She let the maid bring her her supper and ate it without any particular relish, feeling a useless, aimless sadness. While eating, she picked up a book—it was the memoirs of a French general, which interested her today even less than usual. The clock struck half past nine, and loneliness depressing her more every moment, she decided to leave the house after all, and to find the party at the Lake Hotel. She stood up, put her long silk coat over her house gown, and started out. As she went past the Baroness' house at the lake, she noticed that it was completely dark; and she remembered that she had not seen Fortunata for several days. Had she gone away with the distant Captain? But as Beatrice looked back again, she thought she saw a light behind one of the closed blinds. Why did it trouble her? She didn't care any more.

On the high terrace of the Lake Hotel, whose electric arc lights were already out, she found her party, seated around a table, in the faint light of two wall brackets. Conscious suddenly of the too serious expression on her face, she forced an empty smile to her lips. She was greeted warmly, shook hands with all of them in a row, the Director, the architect, their wives, and young Fritz Weber. There was no one else present. "Where is Hugo?" she asked,

somewhat perturbed.

"He left this very moment," answered the architect. "Queer that you didn't meet him."

Unconsciously Beatrice glanced at Fritz, who with an embarrassed, stupid, childish smile, twirled his beer glass and averted his eyes with obvious intent. Then she sat down between him and Frau Welponer, and in order to overcome the menacing thoughts that were arising in her, she began to talk with exaggerated cheerfulness. She was very sorry that Frau Welponer had not been with them on the charming picnic; she asked about the brother and sister, Bertram and Leonie; and finally related that at supper she had read some French memoirs and letters of great men. She found no pleasure in novels and such things any more. It seemed that the others agreed with her. "Love stories are only for young folks," said the architect—"I mean for children, for in a way, we are all still young folks." Fritz too said that he preferred scientific works, or especially books on travel. While he spoke, he moved quite close to Beatrice, and pressed his knee against hers as if by accident; his napkin fell down, he bent down to pick it up, and tremblingly stroked her ankle. Was the boy mad? And he continued speaking, excitedly, with glowing eyes: as soon as he was a doctor, he would join some large expedition, perhaps to Tibet or darkest Africa. The others smiled indulgently at his words; only the Director—Beatrice noted it well—looked at him with sullen envy. As the party arose to go home, Fritz said that he would first take a solitary walk on the lake shore. "Alone?" asked the architect, "that isn't so easy to believe." But Fritz answered that walking alone on summer evenings was one of his particular passions; just recently he had come home about one in the morning, and in fact with Hugo, who at times accompanied him on these nightly jaunts. And as he saw the restless, questioning glance that Beatrice turned to him, he added: "It is quite possible that I shall meet Hugo somewhere down at the lake tonight, if he hasn't gone rowing as he sometimes does."

"This is interesting news," said Beatrice, shaking her head doubtfully.

"Yes, these summer evenings," sighed the architect.

"What have you to say about it?" asked his wife enigmatically.

Frau Welponer, who had gone down the steps of the terrace ahead of the others, remained standing for a moment and looked at the heavens, as if seeking something. Then she let her head sink again in a strange hopeless way. The Director was silent. But in his silence, burned hatred of summer nights, youth, and happiness.

They had hardly reached the lake shore, when Fritz slipped away, as if in fun, and disappeared into the dark. The two couples accompanied Beatrice home. Slowly and with difficulty, they climbed the steep road up the hill. "Why did Fritz run away so suddenly?" Beatrice wondered. "Will he find Hugo at the shore?"

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Did he ever go rowing with him in the evening? Is there a compact between them? Does Fritz know where Hugo is at this moment? Does he know?" And she had to pause a moment, for it seemed to her that her heart had suddenly stopped beating. "As if I did not know where Hugo is! As if I had not known it for days!" . . .

"'Twould be mighty nice if they'd build a railway up this hill," said the architect. He had taken his wife's arm, which, as far as Beatrice could remember, he had never done before. The Director and his wife walked together, in step, both bent and silent. As Beatrice stood before her door, she suddenly knew why Fritz had stolen away down there. He had wanted to avoid going alone into the house with her at night, in the presence of all the others. And she was grateful for the wise gallantry of the young man.

The Director kissed Beatrice's hand. "Whatever may happen to you," trembled in his silence, "I shall understand, and you will have a friend in me."

"Let me alone," answered Beatrice as silently as he. The two couples parted. The Director and his wife disappeared with strange suddenness into the darkness, where wood, mountains, and heaven all ran together. The Arbesbachers took the road towards the other side, where the path was more open, and over which the soft, blue starry night spread on high.

When the door had closed behind her, Beatrice thought: "Shall I look in Hugo's room? What for? I know that he is not at home. I know that he is there where the light shone from behind closed blinds." And she remembered that just now, on her return walk, she had again passed the house, and that it had seemed a house in the dark to her, like the others. But she did not doubt any more that at this hour her son was in the villa that she had passed thoughtlessly, and yet full of foreboding. And she knew too that she was to blame—yes she alone—for she had let it happen. With that one visit to Fortunata, she had imagined that she had fulfilled all her motherly duties; after that she had let it go on as it would—out of laziness, out of weariness, out of cowardice—she had seen nothing, known nothing, thought nothing. Hugo was at Fortunata's at this moment, and not for the first time. A picture came to her, that made her shudder and she hid her face in her hands as if to banish it in that way. Slowly she opened the door to her bedroom. A sadness came over her, a feeling that she had taken leave of something that would never return. The time was past when Hugo was a child, her child. Now he was a young man, one who lived his own life, of which he could no longer tell his mother. Never more would she stroke his cheeks and hair—never more could she kiss his sweet child's mouth as before. Now for the first time, since she had lost him, she was alone.

She sat on her bed and slowly began to undress. How long would he stay away? Probably the whole night. And in the gray of

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early morning, very quietly, in order not to awaken his mother, he would slip through the hall into his room. How often had it happened already? How many nights had he been with her? Many? No, not many. For a few days he had been on a walking tour through the country. Yes, if he had spoken the truth! But he had not been telling the truth lately. Not for a long time. In the winter he played billiards in a coffee house in the suburbs, and where else he might have been, who knew? And suddenly a thought made the blood run faster through her veins: Was he perhaps even then Fortunata's lover: On the day when she had paid her ridiculous visit to the villa down near the lake? And had the Baroness played a shabby trick on her, and then, heart to heart with Hugo, had she scoffed and laughed at her? Yes—even that was possible. For what did she know today of her boy who had grown to manhood in the arms of a wanton? Nothing—nothing.

She leaned on the sill of her open window, and looked into the garden and far away to the dark mountain peaks on the other side of the lake. Sharply outlined, towered the one that Dr. Bertram had never dared attempt to climb. How did it happen that he was not there at the hotel? If he had guessed that she might return, he would surely have been there. Was it not strange that they should still desire her, who was the mother of a boy who already spent his nights with a mistress? Why strange? She was as young, perhaps younger than, Fortunata. And all at once, she felt the outlines of her body under her light garment, with agonizing distinctness, and even a sort of painful pleasure. A noise outside on the path made her jump. She knew it was Fritz coming home. Where could he have been all this time? Did he too perhaps have his little adventure here in the country? She smiled wearily. No, surely not he. For he was a little in love with her. And really—no wonder. She was just at the age that would appeal to so green a youth. Evidently he had wanted to cool his longing out in the night air; and she was a little sorry for him because just tonight the heavens hung so heavy and misty over the lake. And suddenly she remembered such a sultry summer night a long time ago, when her husband had forced her against her will to go with him from the soft privacy of their chamber into the garden, and there, in the dark black shadows of the trees, to exchange wild and tender caresses. Then she thought of the cool morning when a thousand birds had awakened her to a sweet heavy sadness, and she trembled. Where was all that now? Did it not seem that the garden into which she was looking had preserved the memory of that night better than she herself, and that it might be able in some wonderful way to betray her to those who understood the language of the dumb? And she felt as if night in person stood out in the garden, ghostly and mysterious—yes, as if each house, each garden, had its own night, that was quite different from, deeper and more trustworthy than, that meaningless blue

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darkness that spread above the sleeping world, unattainably far away. And that night that belonged to her, stood full of secrets and dreams before her window, and stared into her face with blind eyes. She unconsciously put out her hands as if to ward off the vision; then she returned to her room, went slowly to her mirror, and with a tired droop of the shoulders, began to take down her hair. It must be past midnight. She was very tired, and at the same time far too wide awake. Of what use were all her meditations, all her memories, all her dreams? Of what use were all her fears and hopes? Hopes? Where was there any hope for her? She went again to the window and carefully pulled the blinds. "Even from here, it shines out into the night, into my night," she thought. She locked the door leading to the hall; then according to her old careful habit, she opened the door into her little parlor for a last look. She drew back, frightened. In the semi-darkness, she saw the figure of a man, standing upright in the middle of the room. "Who is there?" she asked. The figure moved. She recognized Fritz. "What are you doing here?" she asked.

He rushed to her and snatched both of her hands. Beatrice pulled them away. "You are not in your right mind," she said.

"Pardon me, dear Frau Heinold," he whispered, "but I—I don't know what to do any more."

"That is very simple," answered Beatrice. "Go to bed." He shook his head. "Go, go," she said, and turned back to her room, and was about to lock the door behind her. Then she felt his arms thrust gently but awkwardly around her neck. She shrank away, but turned around involuntarily and put out her arm, as if to push Fritz back. He took her hand and put it to his lips. "But Fritz," she said, more mildly than had been her intention.

"I shall go quite mad," he whispered.

She smiled. "I believe you are already mad."

"I should have waited here all night," he whispered again. "I had not dreamt that you would open this door. I just wanted to be here near you."

"Now go to your room at once. Do you hear me? Or you will make me really angry." He had taken both her hands.

"I beg you, Frau Heinold."

"Don't be ridiculous, Fritz! That's enough. Let go my hands. That's right. And now, go."

He had let her hands drop; and then she felt the warmth of his lips on her cheek. "I'm going mad. I've been in this room before."

"What?"

"Yes, I spent half of the night here recently, until it was almost light. I couldn't help it. I should like always to be near you."

"Don't say such foolish things."

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He stammered on: "I beg of you, Frau Heinold, Frau Beatrice—Beatrice!"

"That's enough—really you are—what is the matter with you? Shall I call? But for God's sake! Think then—think of Hugo."

"Hugo is not at home. No one hears us."

Quickly that burning pain again rose within her. Then suddenly, with shame and fright she realized that she was glad of Hugo's absence. She felt Fritz's warm lips on hers, and a longing sprang up in her which she had never felt to such an extent before, not even in those far-off days. "Who can blame me for it?" she thought. "To whom am I accountable?" And with desirous arms, she drew the glowing boy to her.

PART THREE

AS Beatrice came out of the dark shadow of the forest into the open, the gravel road stretched out before her, white and burning hot, and she was almost sorry that she had left the Welponers so early in the afternoon. But since Frau Welponer had departed for her usual after-dinner nap as soon as they left the table, and since her son and daughter had also disappeared without any apology, Beatrice would have been obliged to remain alone with the Director, a thing that she must avoid at all events, after the occurrences of the past few days. His attempts to win her favor had become altogether too open; in fact, he had dropped certain hints that gave her to believe that he would be ready to leave his wife and children at her will—and not only that, but that union with her would mean above all that wished for flight from unbearable household ties. For, with her lately acquired painful insight into the relationships of man, Beatrice had realized that that marriage had been deeply undermined, and that a collapse could follow at any time, unexpectedly and without any special reason. She had often noticed the exaggerated care with which the husband and wife spoke to each other, as if the hatred which lowered quiveringly in the hard lines around their mouths might break out at any moment into words that could never be made good again. But not until Fritz had told her last night of the almost incredible rumor, which she still did not believe—of a love affair between her dead husband and Frau Welponer, did she allow herself to take part with any real interest in the cause for the disturbance. And although the rumor had been troubling her even during dinner, while indifferent conversation went on around the table, now as she walked homewards down the path through the glittering summer air, from whose burning breath every living being seemed to have fled to the shelter of closed rooms, Fritz's rude intimations began to work with painful activity on her mind. Why, she asked herself, had he spoken of it, and

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especially that night? Was it in revenge because she had told him jokingly that he had better remain at Ischl with his parents, whom he was going to visit in the morning, instead of coming back the same evening as he had intended? Had a jealous suspicion awakened in him, that with all the charm of his youth, still he meant nothing to her but a handsome young boy, whom she could send home without further ado, when the game was at an end? Or had he only succumbed to his inclination to indiscreet talk, which she had been obliged to curb several times before, and even quite recently, when he evinced a desire to tell her about Hugo's relations with Fortunata? Or was the conversation between Fritz's parents, that he said he had recently overheard, just a child of his fanciful brain—just as his visit to the dissection room, of which he had told her on the day of his arrival, had recently turned out to be empty boasting? But although he had undertaken to tell of the talk of his parents in good faith, might he not have heard wrongly, or misunderstood? This last idea was all the more probable, since not the slightest whisper of that rumor had come to Beatrice before.

Busied with such thoughts, Beatrice reached her villa. Since Hugo had ostensibly gone on a tour, and the maid was having the day off, Beatrice found herself alone in the house. She undressed in her room, and submitting to the heavy weariness that often came over her these summer afternoons, she stretched out on her bed. Consciously enjoying the solitude, the peace, the very faint light, she lay there a while with open eyes. In the large mirror that hung opposite her, she could see the life-size bust-portrait of her husband reflected in faint outline from the wall over her bed. She could see clearly only a red spot that she knew represented the carnation in his button-hole. In the early days after Ferdinand's death, this picture had continued to lead a strangely personal life for Beatrice. She saw it smiling or sad, happy or distressed—in fact, at times, she imagined that in some way the painted features expressed unconcern or despair over their own death. In the course of years, however, it had become dumb and silent, and remained a piece of painted canvas and nothing more. But at this hour, it seemed to want to live again. And although Beatrice could not see very clearly in the mirror, it seemed to her that it sent an ironic look down over her; and memories awoke within her that, though they had seemed harmless, or even gay before, now came to her mind with a new bitter meaning. And in place of the one on whom her suspicions had been fastened, a whole row of women went by, whose features she had forgotten, but who, as she suddenly realized, had all been Ferdinand's loves—admirers who wanted his autograph or photograph, young actresses who took lessons from him, society women whose salons he and Beatrice had often frequented, fellow actresses who had fallen into his arms as wives, brides, or betrayed ones. And she asked herself whether it were

not

his consciousness of guilt that had made him so mild and so wisely indifferent, as it seemed, to any unfaithfulness that Beatrice might commit against his memory. And all of a sudden, as if he had thrown aside the useless uncomfortable mask that he had worn long enough, both alive and dead, he stood before her mind with his red carnation and all—a silly comedian for whom she was nothing but an industrious housewife, the mother of his son, and a woman whom one embraced once in a while when, on a mild summer evening, the magic of propinquity so disposed one. And like his picture, his voice suddenly changed mysteriously. It no longer had the noble ring that sounded more beautiful in her memory than the voices of all the living. It rang empty, affected, and false. But at once she knew that it was not really his voice that she now heard, but that of another who recently had ventured—here in her own house—had ventured to ape the voice, intonation, and actions of her dead husband.

She sat up in bed, threw one arm over the pillow, and stared in horror into the darkness of her chamber. Now for the first time, in this peaceful hour, she recalled that event in all its atrocity. It had happened a week ago, on a Sunday as today—she was sitting in the garden with her son and—she thought the word with a grimace—her lover. Suddenly a young man had appeared, tall and dark, with shining eyes, in a sport outfit, with a yellowish-red tie. She did not recognize him until the cheerful greeting of the others informed her that Rudi Beratoner stood before her, the same young man who had visited Hugo several times the past winter to borrow books from him, and who, as she knew, was one of the two who Hugo had told her had spent that spring night in the Prater with the girls of questionable repute. He was just coming from Ischl, where he had looked for Fritz in vain at his parents' home. Naturally he was invited to dinner. He accepted gladly, a little too boisterously, and proved to be indefatigable in relating hunting stories and all sorts of anecdotes; and his younger friends who seemed like children in comparison with his precociousness, looked at him in astonishment. He also showed a capacity for drink that was far beyond his years. Since the boys did not want to remain behind him, and since even Beatrice allowed herself to drink more than usual, the spirit in the house was much easier than was usual. Beatrice, who noticed with gratitude and emotion that in spite of all the gaiety her guest acted with great respect for her, imagined, as she often did in these days, that all that had happened recently, the truth of which she could not doubt, was only some sort of dream that could be repaired. For a moment, as formerly, she had put her arm around Hugo's shoulders and played with his hair, but she looked coquettishly at Fritz at the same time, and forthwith felt

strange emotions over her own fate and the world. Later she noticed that Fritz was whispering very eagerly to Rudi and seemed to be persuading him to do something very important. She asked gayly what terrible thing the two young men were plotting; Beratoner did not want to answer, but Fritz explained—there was no reason for keeping it a secret—the fact was commonly known that Rudi could impersonate actors remarkably well, not only the living, but even the—but now he stopped. But Beatrice, very much excited and already slightly intoxicated, turned quickly to Rudi Beratoner, and asked somewhat hoarsely, “Then you can impersonate Ferdinand Heinold too?” She pronounced the famous name as if it belonged to a stranger. Beratoner did not want to hear of it. He did not understand Fritz at all—formerly he had practiced such tricks, but not for a long time now; besides, he naturally could not recall the voices of those he had not heard for a long time, and if he had to do something, he preferred to sing a couplet in the style of any comedian they might choose. But Beatrice would not allow any evasion. She wanted nothing more than to take advantage of this opportunity. She trembled with longing to hear the beloved voice, at least in reflected splendor. That that desire might mean something blasphemous did not strike her in her befogged state of mind. At last Beratoner let himself be persuaded. And with beating heart, Beatrice heard at first Hamlet’s monologue, “To be or not to be” ringing through the free summer air in Ferdinand’s heroic sounding voice, then verses from Tasso, then some long forgotten words out of a long forgotten play—she heard the beloved voice, deeply booming and melting softly away. With closed eyes, she drank it in, full of wonder, until suddenly she heard, still in Ferdinand’s voice, but now in his familiar everyday tone: “Grüss Gott, Beatrice!” Then she opened her eyes in great fright and saw before her an insolent, spoiled face, around whose lips there still remained fading traces, like ghostly reminders, of Ferdinand’s smile; she met Hugo’s wandering glance and the half tragic, half stupid simper on Fritz’s face; and heard herself saying as if from afar, a polite word of thanks to the wonderful mimic. The silence that followed was dark and oppressive; they could not bear it very long and soon gay words about summer weather and picnics were flying back and forth. But Beatrice soon arose and went back to her room, where she sank wearily into her armchair and then fell into a sleep from which she awoke hardly an hour later as if from an abysmally deep night. When she walked later in the garden, in the cool of evening, the young people had gone away. They came back soon without Rudi Beratoner, whom they took elaborate pains not to mention further, and it was deeply consoling to Beatrice to see how her son and lover tried with unusual consideration and delicacy to wipe away the distressing impression of the afternoon.

And now, in the quiet solitude of twilight, when Beatrice tried

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to recall the real voice of her husband, she could not do it. It was always the voice of that unwelcome guest that she heard, and she realized more deeply than ever what a crime she had committed against the dead man, worse than any that he could have committed during his life-time against her, more cowardly and inexpressible than unfaithfulness and betrayal. He was rotting deep in the ground and his widow allowed stupid boys to make fun of him, of that wonderful man who had loved her—her alone, in spite of everything that had happened, just as she had loved no other but him, and would never love any other. Now she knew it for the first time—since she had a lover. A lover! Oh, if he would never come back, that lover of hers—if he would only go away forever out of her sight and out of her blood, and if she could live again in her villa with Hugo in the quiet peace of summer, as before! As before? And if Fritz were no longer there, would she have her son back? Did she still have the right to expect it? Had she troubled much about him recently? Had she not been much happier that he went his own way? And she remembered how, recently, when she had been walking in the wood with the Arbesbachers, she had seen her son hardly a hundred steps away together with Fortunata, Wilhelmine Fallehn, and a strange man; and she had hardly been ashamed, only had talked more eagerly with her friends so that they might not notice Hugo. And in the evening of the same day, yesterday:—yes, certainly it was only yesterday—how slowly time went by—she had met Fräulein Fallehn and that strange man, who, with his black shiny hair, his sparkling white teeth, his mustache cut English fashion, his pongee silk suit, and his red silk tie, looked like a circus-rider, a swindler, or a Mexican millionaire. When Wilhelmine nodded in greeting with her never-changing deep solemnity, he had taken off his hat, bared his white teeth, and looked at Beatrice with an insolent smile that made her blush even in recollection. What a pair they were! She believed them capable of any vice, any crime. And these were the friends of Fortunata, these were people with whom her son now went walking and whose company he now frequented! Beatrice covered her face with her hands, sighed and whispered to herself: “Away, away, away!” She said the word without really knowing what it meant. Gradually she began to realize its full meaning and thought that perhaps in it lay her and Hugo’s salvation. Yes, they must go away, both of them, mother and son, and as quickly as possible. She must take him with her—or he must take her. Both of them must leave this place before something would happen to them that could never be repaired, before she would lose all rights of motherhood, before her son’s youth would be completely ruined, before fate would fall crashing down upon them both. There was still time. No one knew of her own adventure, otherwise she would have noticed it in some way, at least in the actions of the architect. And the adventure of her son

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was doubtless also not yet known. And if they did know it, they would excuse it in so inexperienced a youth; and they could not even reproach a mother who had been so careless up to this time, if she should flee with him now, as if she had just discovered it. Therefore it was not too late. The difficulty lay elsewhere: to persuade Hugo to undertake such a sudden journey. Beatrice could not guess how far the power of the Baroness extended over Hugo's heart and mind. She knew nothing, nothing about him, since she had her own love affairs to worry over. But Hugo was clever, and he would not deceive himself into thinking that his adventure with Fortunata was to last forever, and so he could easily see that a few days more or less did not matter. And in her thoughts, she spoke to him: "We cannot go directly to Vienna. Oh, we can't think of it, my child. We shall go South. We have been planning that for a long time. To Venice, to Florence, to Rome. Just think, you will see the old palaces, and St. Peter's! Hugo, let's go tomorrow! You and I alone. Another journey like that one two years ago in the spring. Do you remember? Over Murrensteig by carriage to Mariazell. Wasn't it beautiful? And this time it will be still more beautiful. And if it'll be hard at first, oh, God, I'll understand, and I'll not ask you anything and you'll not have to tell me anything. But seeing so much beauty and novelty, you'll forget. You'll forget very soon. Much sooner than you think—"

"And you, Mother—you?" She heard Hugo's voice saying it. She shuddered. And she dropped her hands from her eyes as if to assure herself that she was alone. Yes, she was alone, quite alone in the house in the half darkened room; outside, the summer day breathed heavily and sultrily; no one could disturb her. She had plenty of quiet and time to plan what to say to her son. Of one thing she was certain: she need not fear a response such as she had imagined in her excitement: "And you, Mother?" That he could not ask. For he knew nothing—he could know nothing. And he would never know. Even if some suggestive whisper should come to his ear, he would not believe it. He would never believe anything like it of his mother. On that score she could be quite at ease. And she saw herself wandering with him through some fantastic landscape that she remembered from a painting—a grayish-yellow road with a town all in blue and with many towers swimming in the distance. Then she saw themselves walking in a large square under arched passages—strange people met them and looked at her and her son. They looked at her meaningly with bold teathy smiles, and as if they thought: "Ah, she has brought a nice youth with her on her journey! She might be his mother." What? Did the people take them for lovers? Well, why not? They could not know that the boy was her son, and they would know her for one of those over-ripe women who desire such young blood. And there they would be, walking around a strange city among strange people and

he would think of his beloved with the Pierrot face, and she, of her sweet blond boy. She groaned aloud. She wrung her hands. Whither? Whither? All of a sudden, one of the love-words with which she had held him to her bosom last night slipped treacherously from her lips—the boy whom she would bid farewell forever and whom she would never—never see again. Yet, just once more, if he came back today. Or tomorrow morning. But tonight her door would be locked. It was over forever. And she would say at parting that she had loved him very much—with a love that he would never meet again. And with that proud feeling, he would realize all the more his gallant duty to eternal silence. And he would understand that it must be thus, and he would kiss her hand once more and would go. Would go. And then what? Then what? And she lay there with parted lips, her arms outstretched, her body trembling, and she knew that if he would come at that moment into the door, young and full of longing, she would not be able to resist him and would again belong to him with all the ardor that was now awakened in her like something long forgotten, in fact, like something that she had never before known. And now she knew too, in simultaneous agony and ecstasy, that the youth to whom she had given herself would not be her last lover. Already hot curiosity raged within her: who would the next one be? Dr. Bertram? She remembered an evening—was it three or eight days ago?—she did not know—time dragged so—went by so quickly—the hours melted into each other and meant nothing—it happened in Welpner's garden—Bertram had suddenly run up to her on a dark path, had drawn her to him, and embraced and kissed her. And even though she had angrily pushed him away, what did that matter to him, who in spite of that must have felt the submissive pressure of her lips, so accustomed to kisses? That was why he had immediately become so quiet and patient, as if he well knew just where he stood, and she could read in his look: "Winter belongs to me, dear lady. We have been in agreement for a long time. We both know that death is bitter and virtue only an empty word, and that one should let nothing go by." But it was not Bertram who spoke to her. Suddenly, while she lay there with closed eyes, another face had pushed Bertram's out of the way, that of the circus rider or gambler or Mexican who had recently looked at her so boldly, just as Bertram had done and every one else. They all had the same look—all—and that look always said and wished and knew the same thing; and if one gave in to one of them one was lost. They took the one who happened to please them, and threw her away again. Yes, if one let herself be taken and thrown away. But she was not of that class. No, it had not gone that far with her. Passing adventures were not her style. If she had been created for that, how could she take the affair with Fritz so much to heart? And if she suffered such pangs of remorse and fear, it was only because

that which she had done was so much against her nature. She hardly understood that it all had happened. There was no other way to explain it, than that it had come over her like a disease in these unbearably hot summer days, and had left her defenseless and weak. And just as the disease had come, so it would leave her again. Soon, soon. She felt in all her pulses, all her senses, in her whole body, that she was not the same as she had been formerly. She could hardly collect her thoughts. How feverishly they ran through her mind! She did not know what she wanted, what she hoped for, what she regretted, hardly knew if she were happy or unhappy. It could only be a disease. There were women in whom such a condition lasted a long time, and would hardly ever improve; such a one was Fortunata and that marble-white Fräulein Fallehn. There were others again whom it invaded or attacked and left soon after. That was her case. Most certainly. How otherwise could she have lived all these years since Ferdinand had gone, as chaste as a young girl and without desire? It only came over her this summer. All the women looked differently this year; the girls too—their eyes were brighter and bolder, and their behavior was lighter, more enticing and seductive. And one heard such stories! What was that one about the doctor's young wife, who went out on the lake evenings with an oarsman and did not come home till the next morning? And about the two young girls who lay naked on the meadow just as the little steam-boat went by, and suddenly, before any one could recognize them, had disappeared into the forest? Really, it was in the air this year. The sun had unusual strength, and the waves of the lake caressed her body more tenderly than ever before. And when that secret curse was lifted, would she again be as she had been, and could she slip through the hot adventures of these days and nights as if through an easily forgotten dream? And if she felt it coming again as she had felt it coming on this time, far in advance, when longing began to rage in her blood with dangerous intensity, she would be able to choose a much better and cleaner salvation than this time—she would marry again as other women did when they felt as she did. Then an ironic smile came to her lips, as if taken unawares. She thought of some one who had recently been there, one whom she credited with the most honorable intentions, the lawyer, Dr. Teichmann. She saw him before her in a brand new green and brown sport suit, with a plaid tie, his green hat with the fur cockade placed dashingly on his head—in short in an outfit by which he openly wanted to show that he knew how to look very fetching, even though he, a very serious man under ordinary circumstances, placed no worth upon such superficialities. Then she saw him sitting at dinner on the veranda between her son and her lover, addressing now one, now the other, with the seriousness of a senior assistant master, and saw him in his ridiculous innocence which had tempted her to exchange handclasps

playfully with her Fritz under the table. He had left the same evening, since he was to meet friends in Bozen, and although Beatrice had not invited him to remain, he seemed very much puffed up and full of hope on leaving, for in the gay mood of that summer day she had not deprived even him of encouraging and exciting looks. Now she regretted it as she regretted so much else; and her next conversation with him appeared all the more uncertain because in the complete relaxation of that hour, she was more painfully conscious of the gradual weakening of her will-power. With a similar feeling of shame, she recalled the feeling of helplessness that had at times come over her during her last talks with Director Welponer, and then it seemed to her that if she were to choose, she could sooner think of herself as the wife of the Director—yes she must admit that the notion did not lack charm for her. Today she felt as if this man had interested her from earliest times. The things that the architect had told her about the grandiose speculations and battles of the Director, in which he had been victor over ministers and members of the court, were especially well calculated to arouse Beatrice's curiosity and admiration. Besides, Dr. Teichmann, too, had called him a genius when speaking of him, and had compared him in the daring of his undertakings, which always meant everything to Teichmann, to a valiant cavalry-general. And so it flattered Beatrice a little that just this man seemed to want her, apart from the satisfaction that it would offer her of taking the husband away from the woman who had once robbed her of hers. "Has robbed me of mine?" she asked herself in confused surprise. "What is wrong with me? What am I thinking of? Do I believe it, then? It may not be true. Everything else, but not that. I should have noticed something of it. Noticed something? Why? Wasn't Ferdinand an actor, and a great one too? Why couldn't it have happened without my noticing it? I was so trusting, that it was not difficult to betray me. Not difficult—but that does not mean that it actually happened. Fritz is a gossip, a liar, and these rumors are false and stupid. And even though it did happen, it happened long ago. And Ferdinand is dead. And she who was once his love is an old woman. What does all the past mean to me? What is going on now between the Director and me is a new story, which has nothing to do with the past."

And she thought further, that in truth it wouldn't be so bad to retire some day into the noble villa with its great park. What wealth, what glamour! What an outlook for Hugo's future! Truly, he was no longer young, and that must be considered to some degree, especially when one was as pampered as she had been recently. Yes, during this very summer, during these last weeks, he seemed to be aging more rapidly than ever. Was not perhaps his love for her to blame? Well, what was the difference? There were others, younger ones, and he would be betrayed anyhow: it was evidently his lot.

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She laughed dryly: it sounded ugly and mean, and she jumped up as if out of a wild dream. "Where am I, where am I?" she asked herself. She wrung her hands entreatingly. "How deeply shall you let me sink? Is there no halting any more? What is it then that makes me so wretched and so contemptible? What makes me reach out into space, and to be no better than Fortunata and other women of her sort?" And suddenly, with a failing heart, she knew what made her so wretched: the foundation on which she had rested in certainty for years was trembling, and the heavens were darkening over her: the only man she had ever loved, her Ferdinand, had been a liar. Yes—now she knew it. His whole life with her had been fraud and hypocrisy: he had betrayed her with Frau Welponer and with other women, with actresses, and countesses, and prostitutes. And when, on sultry nights, the languid charm of propinquity had driven him into Beatrice's arms, then it was the worst and lowest of all his lies, for she knew that on her breast he had thought of the others, all the others, in lust and malice. But why did she know it all of a sudden? Why? Because she was no different, no better than he. Was it Ferdinand whom she held in her arms, the comedian with the red flower, who often enough came home from the public-house at three in the morning, smelling of wine, swaggering, and babbling empty and unclean things, the one who as a young man had subordinated his higher passions to the favor of an old widow, and who in gay company read tender little notes that love-sick fools had sent to his dressing-room? No, that one she had never loved. She would have fled from that one in the first month of her marriage. He whom she loved was not Ferdinand Heinold: he was Hamlet and Cyrano and King Richard, and this one and that one, heroes and scoundrels, conquerors and martyrs, the blessed and the damned. And he who with strange fire had lured her into the summer night out of the secret darkness of their chamber to unutterable ecstasy, was not really he, but some sort of spirit full of hidden power out of the mountains, whose part he was playing without knowing it—for he always played a part, because he could not live without a mask, because he was afraid to see his real features reflected in her eyes. And so she had always betrayed him just as he had betrayed her and had constantly lived a life lost from the beginning, a life of fantastically wild lust—except that no one could have suspected it, not even she herself. But now it was revealed. She was destined to sink lower and lower, and some day—who knew how soon—it would be clear to the whole world that all her bourgeois respectability was a lie, that she was no better than Fortunata, Wilhelmine Fallehn and all the others whom till today she had despised. And her son would know it too; and if he did not believe the affair with Fritz, he would believe a next one—would have to believe it—and suddenly she saw him vividly

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before her with eyes wide open and full of pain, his arms outstretched in repulsion; and when she wanted to come near him, he turned around in horror, and hurried away with the fleetness of a dream. And she groaned aloud, suddenly wide awake. To lose Hugo? Everything, but not that. Better to die than to have her son no more. To die—yes. For then she would have him again. Then he would come to his mother's grave and kneel down and deck it with flowers and fold his hands in prayer for her. With that thought an emotion crept into her heart that was sweet and at the same time repulsive, and falsely peaceful. Still, deep within her, she heard a murmur: "Have I the right to rest? Haven't I much more to think about? Certainly—tomorrow we shall start out on our journey. Tomorrow—how much there is to do—so much—so much—"

In the quiet dusk that surrounded her, she felt that outside, the world, people, and the landscape had awakened from their afternoon drowsiness. All sorts of distant sounds, indefinite and confused, came to her ears through the closed blinds. And she knew that people were already wandering on the roads, were rowing on the lake, were playing tennis, and drinking coffee on the hotel terrace—yes in her still half dreaming condition, she saw swarms of happy summer-resorters, like tiny puppets, but real as life, bobbing up and down before her. The ticking of her watch on the night table sounded too loud in her ears, and like a warning. Beatrice was curious to know how late it was, but she still lacked the strength to turn her head or even to turn on the light. Some new, nearer sound, evidently from the garden, had become gradually more audible. What could it be? The voices of men, without a doubt. So near? Voices in the garden? Hugo and Fritz? How was it possible that they should both have returned so soon? Well, it was already evening, and Fritz had evidently been drawn back by his love. No doubt they had first rung the bell, and she had not heard it because she was asleep. Then they must have climbed over the fence; naturally they could not suspect that the mistress of the house was at home. Now one of the two was laughing out there. What laugh was that? It was not Hugo's laugh. But Fritz did not laugh like that either. Now the other was laughing. That was Fritz. Now again, the first one. That was not Hugo. He spoke. It was not Hugo's voice. Then Fritz was in the garden with some one else? They were quite near. It seemed as if both had sat down on the bench, on the white one under the window. And now she heard Fritz calling the other one by name. Rudi—Well, then, it was he who was sitting with Fritz under her window. But that was not so astonishing. Recently they had arranged in her presence that Rudi Beratoner should come back very soon. Perhaps he had been there earlier, had seen no one and then had met Fritz, whom love had brought back so soon from Ischl, at the railroad station or somewhere else. In any case, there was no reason why she should rack her brains about it. There

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they were, the two young men, sitting on the white bench under the window of the adjoining room. Now she must get up, dress, and go out into the garden. Why? Did she really have to go into the garden? Had she such a pressing desire to see Fritz again, or was she the least bit anxious to greet the shameless youth who recently had aped her dead husband's voice and facial expression with such disgraceful facility? Still there was nothing else for her to do, but to bid the young people good evening. She couldn't keep so still for all the time that they remained out there gossiping about everything they pleased. That it could not be a very pure conversation, she could not doubt. Well, that did not concern her. They should say what they wished.

Beatrice had gotten up and was sitting on the edge of her bed. Then she heard a word with perfect clearness, the name of her son. Naturally, they were talking about Hugo, and what they were saying was not difficult to guess. Now they laughed again. But she couldn't understand the words. If she were very near the window, she might be able to understand the conversation, but perhaps it were better to forego that. She might experience some unpleasant surprises. In any case, it would be wisest to get ready as quickly as possible, and to go into the garden. But Beatrice was impelled to slip first very quietly to the closed blinds. She looked out through a small crack and could see nothing but a strip of green; then through another crack, a blue strip of sky. But now, she heard all the better what was being said on the bench. First, it was only the name of her Hugo that she could make out. Everything was so whispered and hushed, as if both of them had in mind the possibility of being overheard. Beatrice put her ear to the crack and smiled with a sigh. They were talking about school. Very clearly, she heard: "That horrid chap would have liked to flunk him." And then: "A mean dog." She slipped back, dressed quickly in a comfortable house gown; and then, driven by her uncontrollable curiosity, she went back to the window. And now she remarked that they were not talking any more about school. "A Baroness, is she?" That was Rudi Beratoner's voice. And now—pah—what a disgusting word—"He's with her all day long,—and today—" That was Fritz's voice. Against her will, she put her fingers to her ears, went away from the window and made up her mind to go immediately into the garden. But before she had reached the door, she was again driven to the window; she knelt down, put her ear to the crack, and looked out with wide open eyes and burning cheeks. Rudi Beratoner was telling a story—at times he lowered his voice to a whisper, but from the single words that Beatrice gathered here and there, it became gradually clear to her what the affair was about. It was a love adventure of which Rudi was telling; Beatrice could make out French pet names which he pronounced in a sweet, gentle voice. Ah, evidently he was copying the manner of

that person. He did that thing so remarkably well. Who slept in the adjoining room? His sister. Ah, it was the governess—More—more—how did it work? When the sister slept, the governess came to him. And then—and then—? Beatrice did not want to hear it, and yet she listened on and on, with growing eagerness. What words! What a tone! So this was how these boys spoke about their sweet-hearts! No, no, not all, and not about all. What a woman that must be! Surely she deserved it, that they should speak like that about her and not otherwise. But why did she deserve it? After all, what crime had she committed? It was only loathsome when they spoke about it. When Rudi Beratoner held her in his arms, he was surely very tender and had pure loving words for her—as they all had at those moments. If only she could see Fritz’s face! Oh, she could picture it. His cheeks would burn and his eyes would glow. Now there was silence for a while. Evidently the story was finished.

And suddenly she heard Fritz’s voice. He was asking: “What, must you know everything so exactly?” A heavy feeling of envy stirred in Beatrice. “What, do you want an answer to that?” Yes, Rudi Beratoner was speaking. Well, then, speak louder at least. I want to hear what you are saying, you rogue, who have insulted my husband in his grave, and who now are betraying and reviling your beloved. Louder! Oh, God, it was loud enough! He was not saying anything now—He was asking a question—he wanted to know—if Fritz—had here in town—yes, you blackguard—run riot with your own profane words! It will not help you. You shall not learn anything. Fritz is hardly more than a boy, but he is nobler than you. He knows what he owes a respectable woman who has shown him her favor. Isn’t that so, Fritz, my sweet Fritz?—You’ll not say anything, will you?

What held her so firmly rooted to the floor, that she could not get up, hurry out, and put an end to the shameful conversation? But what would it have helped? Rudi Beratoner was not the man to be so easily satisfied. If he did not get his answer today at this time, then he would repeat his question on the following day. It was best to remain there and continue to listen—then one knew where one was, at least. Why so softly, Fritz? Speak out. Why should you not glorify your happiness? A respectable woman like myself—that’s quite different from a governess. Beratoner spoke louder. Beatrice heard him say quite distinctly: “Then you must be a regular idiot.” Ah, let them take you for an idiot, Fritz. Accept the title. What, you do not believe him, you rascal? You want to worm his secret out of him at all costs? Have you any suspicions? Has any one told you already? And again she heard Fritz’s whispering, though it was quite impossible to understand the words. Now again, Beratoner’s voice, deep and coarse: “What, a married woman? Go on—would such a one ever—” Will you not keep still, you wretch? She felt that never in her life had she hated any one

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as she hated this youth who insulted her without knowing that it was she whom he was insulting. What, Fritz? For Heaven's sake, louder! "She has already gone away." Ah, excellent, Fritz, you want to protect me from insulting suspicions. She listened. She drank in his words. "A villa near the lake—her husband is a lawyer." What a rogue! How deliciously he lied! She might really have enjoyed it, if not for the fear that agitated her. What? The husband was horribly jealous? He had threatened to kill her if he discovered anything? What? Till four o'clock this morning? Every night—every—night—Enough, enough, enough! Will you not be still? Aren't you ashamed? Why do you defile me? If your fine friend does not know that it is I of whom you are speaking, still you do know it. Why don't you lie instead? Enough, enough! And she wanted to stop her ears, but instead of doing so, she listened all the more attentively. Not a syllable escaped her any more. And in despair, she heard from the lips of her boy the detailed description of those holy nights that he spent in her arms, heard it in words that beat down upon her like the lashes of a whip, in expressions that she heard for the first time, but that were quickly understood, and that brought bloody shame to her brow. She knew that everything that Fritz was saying out there in the garden was nothing but the truth, and yet she felt that it had already ceased to be the truth, that this contemptible chatter had turned what had been his and her happiness into filth and lies. And to him, she had belonged! He was the first to whom she had given herself since she was free! Her teeth chattered, her cheeks and brow burned, her knees sank weakly to the floor. Suddenly she drew back—Rudi Beratoner wanted to see the house. And how did it happen that the people had already gone away in the finest part of the summer? "I don't believe a single word of your story. A lawyer's wife? Ridiculous! Shall I tell you who it is?" She listened with her ears, with her soul, with all her senses. But no word came. But without looking, she knew that Beratoner was indicating the house with his eyes; he was pointing exactly to the window behind which she was kneeling.

And now came Fritz's answer: "What's the matter with you? You are quite crazy."

Then the other one: "But you needn't say any more. I have already noticed it. Congratulations! Yes, not every one has it so convenient. Yes—the—but if I wanted—" Beatrice could not hear more. She hardly knew how it happened. Perhaps it was the blood roaring in her brain that had drowned out Beratoner's last words. For a long time, the conversation outside was lost in this roaring, until she could again understand Fritz's words:

"Well, then, keep still. What if she's at home!" It's a little too late to think of that, my dear boy.

"Well, what if she is?" said Beratoner loudly and insolently. Then Fritz was whispering again in quick excitement, and suddenly

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Beatrice heard both of them getting up from the bench. For Heaven's sake, what now? She threw herself flat on the floor, so that it would be impossible to espy her through the crack in the blind. Shadows passed before the blinds, steps crunched on the gravel path, a couple of muffled words, then a faint laugh further away—and then nothing more. . . . She waited. Nothing stirred. Then she heard their voices dying away farther out in the garden—then nothing—for a long time—nothing, until she was certain they both were far away. They might have climbed over the fence as they had come, and might be telling each other their stories outside. Was there anything left to tell? Had Fritz forgotten anything? He would make up for it now. And in his delightful way, he would find a few more things to add in order to impress Rudi rightly. Why not? Yes, that was the gaiety of youth. One had his sister's governess, the other, the mother of his school-mate, and the third, a Baroness, who formerly had been in the theatre. Yes, they had enough to say, these young men—they knew women and could rightly say that one was like the other.

And Beatrice wept silently to herself. She still lay outstretched on the floor. Why get up? Why get up now? When she would finally make up her mind to get up, it would be only to put an end to it all. Oh, to meet Fritz again, and the other one—She could spit in their faces, beat them with her fists. Wouldn't that be a solace and a joy?—to rush after them, to scream in their faces: "You boys, you wretches, aren't you ashamed, aren't you ashamed? But at the same time, she knew that she would not do it. She felt that it was not worth the trouble, since she had decided and must remain decided to go on a path on which no scolding and no derision could follow her. Never, never, could she in her disgrace look any one in the eye again. She had but one more thing to do on this earth: to take leave of the one who was dear to her—her son! Of him alone! But naturally, without his noticing it. Only she would know that she was leaving him forever—that she was kissing the brow of her dear child for the last time—How strange it was to think such thoughts, lying stretched and motionless on the floor. If some one were to come into the room now, she would be taken for dead without fail. "Where will they find me?" she thought. "How shall I do it? How shall I arrange it, that I shall be lying here senseless, never to awaken again?"

A noise in the front room made her start. Hugo had come home. She heard him going down the hall, past her door, and opening his—and now there was silence again. He had returned. Now she was not alone any more. She got up slowly, with aching limbs. It was almost completely dark in the room and the air suddenly seemed unbearably sultry. She did not understand why she had been lying so long on the floor like that, and why she had not

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opened the blinds much sooner. She quickly did so now, and before her eyes spread the garden, the towering mountains, and the heavens darkening above her, and she felt as if she had not seen all this for many days and nights. The small world spread out in the evening light, so wonderful and peaceful that even Beatrice felt its calm. At the same time, however, she felt a fear creep gently into her mind. She must not let herself be deceived and confused by this peace. And she said to herself: "What I have heard, I have heard; what has happened, has happened. The quiet of this evening, the peace of this world, are not for me: morning will come, the noises of the day will recommence; people will remain malicious and mean, and love, a filthy joke. And I am one who can never forget it, not in the daytime or in the night, not in solitude, or in new pleasure, not at home or abroad. And I have nothing more to do in this world than to place a farewell kiss on the brow of my beloved son, and go—What can he be doing there alone in his room?" From his open window a faint light shone out over the gravel and turf. Was he already in bed—wearied after the joy and exertion of his trip? A shudder ran through her body, strangely composed of fear, horror, and longing. Yes, she longed for him, but for a different one than the one who lay in his room and who had the breath of Fortunata's body about him. She longed for the former Hugo, for the fresh, clean boy, who had once told her about the kiss of a little girl at the dance, for the Hugo who had driven with her one beautiful summer day over the country-side—and she wished for that time to return, when she herself was different—a mother, worthy of that son, and not a good-for-nothing woman, about whom spoiled boys dared gossip lewdly, as about any wanton. Ah, if there were only miracles! But there were none. Never could that hour be unmade when, with burning cheeks, on aching knees, with thirsty ears, she had listened to the story of her disgrace—and her happiness. Even in ten, in twenty, in fifty years, as an old man, Rudi Beratoner would still remember this hour, when in his youth he had sat on a white bench in the garden of Frau Beatrice Heinold, and his school-mate had told him how night after night, until early morning, he had lain in bed with her. She shuddered, she wrung her hands, she looked up to the heavens, whose clouds remained still as death and showed no surprise at her lonely agony. All sorts of noises from the street and lake came up to her in faint confusion; the mountains rose up darkly to the beckoning night, the yellow fields lay dully glowing in the twilight that was creeping in all around. How long would she remain here so motionlessly? What was she awaiting? Had she forgotten that Hugo might disappear out of the house just as he had come, to one who meant more to him than she? There was not much time to lose. Quickly she unbolted her door, went into the small

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salon, and stood before Hugo's room. For a moment she hesitated, listened, but heard nothing; then she opened the door hastily.

Hugo was sitting on his divan and stared up at his mother with wide eyes, as if he had been frightened out of a restless sleep. Over his face played strange shadows from the uncertain light of the electric lamp, standing with its green shade on the table in the center of the room. Beatrice remained for a moment at the door, Hugo threw his head back; it seemed as if he wanted to get up, but he remained seated, his arms extended, his hands resting flat on the divan. Beatrice felt the tension of this moment with heart-rending pain. An unequaled fear gripped her soul; and she said to herself, "He knows all. . . . What will happen?" she thought in the same breath. She went to him, forced herself to look happier, and asked: "Were you asleep, Hugo?"

"No, Mother," he answered, "I was just lying down." She looked into a pale, miserable childish face; unutterable sympathy, in which her own suffering was buried, arose within her; still trembling, she laid her hand on his tangled hair, then put her arm around him, sat down beside him, and gently began: "Well, my child—" Then she did not know what to say next. His face was violently distorted; she took his hands, he pressed hers distractedly, stroked her fingers and looked away; his smile was like a mask, his eyes reddened, his breast began to heave, and suddenly he slipped from the divan, lay at his mother's feet, put his head in her lap, and wept bitterly. Beatrice, shaken to the very depths, and yet happy in a way, for she felt that he had not become estranged from her, at first did not say a word, let him weep while she played quietly with his hair, and asked herself in terror: "What can have happened?" And she comforted herself immediately: "Perhaps nothing unusual. Perhaps nothing except that his nerves are giving way." And she remembered very similar convulsive attacks that her dead husband had suffered for seemingly negligible reasons—after the excitement of a great role, after an experience that had wounded his artistic vanity, or entirely without ground, at least without any that she could discover. And suddenly she began to wonder whether Ferdinand did not sometimes cry out on her lap the disappointments and griefs that he had suffered at the hands of some other woman. But why did that trouble her? What he had done, he had expiated, and all that was far away, so far away! Today it was her son who wept in her lap, and she knew that he wept because of Fortunata. With what pain did that realization grip her heart! Into what depths did her own experience sink when she found herself in the presence of her son's mental agony! Whither did her disgrace and pain and desire for death flee, before the burning wish to help her dearly beloved child, who wept in her lap? And in over-

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flowing desire to aid him, she whispered: "Don't cry, my boy. Everything will be all right again." And when he shook his head, as if in denial, she repeated in a firmer tone: "It will be all right again, believe me." And she realized that she had directed these words of consolation not only to her son, but to herself. If it were in her power to help her son out of his despair, to fill him with new courage for life, that promise and strength must arise out of this knowledge alone, and even more from his gratitude and the feeling that he could belong again solely to her. And suddenly the picture rose up before her of that fantastic landscape in which she had dreamed she was walking with Hugo, and a thought full of promise came to her: "If I were to undertake the voyage with Hugo, that I had been planning before that dreadful hour—and if we were never to return home from that journey?—And if out there, in foreign lands, far from all whom we know, in a purer atmosphere, we were to begin a new, a better life?—"

Then he suddenly raised his head from her lap—his eyes wandered, his mouth was distorted, and he cried hoarsely: "No, no, it will never be all right again!" And he got up, looked absently at his mother, took a few steps towards the table as if he were seeking something there, then walked up and down the room a few times with sunken head, and finally remained standing motionlessly at the window, his eyes turned to the night outside. "Hugo," called his mother, who had followed him with her eyes, but did not feel capable of getting up from the divan. And again, imploringly: "Hugo, my boy!" Then he turned to her again with that forced smile that was more painful than his weeping. And tremblingly she asked again: "What has happened?" "Nothing, Mother," he answered in a sort of exaltation.

Now she stood up decidedly and went over to him. "Do you know why I came to you?" He merely looked at her. "Well, guess." He shook his head. "I wanted to ask you if you wouldn't like to go on a short trip."

"A trip," he repeated, seeming not to understand.

"Yes, Hugo, a trip—to Italy. We have time; school does not open for three weeks. We can be back long before that. Well, what do you think of it?"

"I don't know," he answered. She put her arms around his neck. How much like Ferdinand he looked! Once he had played the part of such a young boy and had looked exactly like him. And she joked: "Well, if you don't know, Hugo, I do know very well that we are to take a journey. Yes, my boy, there's no more to say about it. And now dry your eyes, cool your forehead, and we'll go out together."

"Go out?"

"Yes, certainly. This is Sunday and there is no supper at home. Besides, we are to meet the others down at the hotel. And the

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moonlight party on the lake, don't you know that it is to take place today too?"

"Won't you go alone, Mother? I could come for you later."

An extravagant fear suddenly seized her. Did he want her out of the way? Why? For pity's sake! She forced back the frightful thought. And controlling herself, she said: "Aren't you hungry?"

"No," he answered.

"Neither am I. How would it be to go first for a little walk?"

"For a walk?"

"Yes, and then take the little detour to the hotel."

He hesitated for a while. She stood there in strained expectation. Finally, he nodded. "Good, Mother, get ready."

"Oh, I'm ready, I only need to get my coat." But she did not budge. He seemed not to notice this, went to his wash-basin, poured water out of the pitcher into his hands, and cooled his forehead, eyes, and cheeks. Then he ran his comb quickly through his hair a few times. "Yes, make yourself handsome," said Beatrice. And she remembered sadly how often she had said these words in long past times to Ferdinand when he was preparing to go out—God knew where—

Hugo took his hat and said smilingly: "I am ready, Mother."

She hurried into her room, got her coat, and didn't fasten it until she was again in Hugo's room. "Now, come," she said.

As both were leaving the house, the maid was just returning from her Sunday holiday. But although she greeted her mistress obsequiously, Beatrice noticed from the almost imperceptible way in which that person lowered her eyes, that she knew all that had been happening during the past weeks in this house—Still she cared little about that. Everything was indifferent to her now, next to the feeling of happiness, the long lost feeling, that she had Hugo at her side.

They walked on through the meadows under the mute blue night of the sky, close to each other, and as rapidly as if they had a goal. At first they said nothing. But before they entered the darkness of the forest, Beatrice turned to her son and said: "Won't you take my arm, Hugo?" Hugo took her arm and she felt better. They walked on in the heavy shadows of the trees, through whose thick branches the light from some villa lying in its depths broke from place to place. Beatrice let her hand slip over to Hugo's, she fondled it, lifted it to her lips, and kissed it. He did not hinder her. No, he knew nothing about her. Or was he just making the best of it? Could he understand it, though she was his mother? Soon they arrived at a broad greenish-blue strip of light that lay before the gate of Welponer's villa. Now they could see each other face to face, but they looked ahead into the dark that immediately swallowed them up again. In this part of the forest, the darkness was so thick, that they had to slow their steps in order not to stumble.

“Look out,” said Beatrice from time to time. Hugo only shook his head and they held firmly on to each other. After a while they reached a path that, as they well knew from happier hours, led down to the lake. They turned down this path and again came into a faintly lighted place where the trees stood back and left an open meadow over which hung the still, starless sky. From here, a weather-beaten wooden stairway on one side of which an unsteady hand railing offered some support, led down to the road below, that to the right lost itself in the night, but to the left led again to the town from which countless lights shone up to them. In mute agreement, Beatrice and Hugo turned their footsteps in this direction. And as if their walk together through the dark, though speechless, still brought her closer to him, Beatrice said in a light, almost joking tone: “I don’t like it when you cry, Hugo.” He did not answer, but looked absently away from her over the steel gray lake that now seemed to extend like a narrow strip beneath the mountains. “Formerly,” began Beatrice again, and there was a sigh in her voice, “formerly you told me everything.” And while she said that, she felt again as if she were saying these words to Ferdinand and as if she would learn all the secrets of her dead husband, that he had so disgracefully kept from her, when he was yet on earth. “Am I becoming insane?” she thought. “Am I already mad?” And as if to recall herself to the present, she snatched Hugo’s arm with such force, that he drew back frightened. But she went on: “Wouldn’t it be easier for you, Hugo, if you were to tell me about it?” And she clung to him again. But while her own question continued to sound within her, she felt that it was not only the wish to relieve Hugo’s soul that put this question into her mouth, but that a peculiar kind of curiosity had begun to rage in her, of which she was deeply ashamed in her heart. And Hugo, as if he guessed the secret disgrace of her question, answered nothing, and in fact, let his arm slip out of hers again, as if by accident. Disappointed and left alone, Beatrice walked beside him along the gloomy street. “What good am I on this earth,” she asked herself, “if I am not his mother? Is today the day to lose everything? Am I nothing more than a loose word in the mouths of spoiled boys? And that feeling of belonging to Hugo, of our common safety up there in the gracious dark of the forest, was all that only an illusion? Then life is no longer bearable, then everything is really over. But why does the thought frighten me? Was it not long ago decided? Did I not make up my mind earlier to put an end to it all? And did I not know that nothing else remained for me to do?” And trailing behind her, like jeering ghosts, hissed the terrible words that she heard today through the crack in the blind, and that meant her love and her shame, her happiness and her death. And for a moment, she thought in sisterly fashion of that other one, who once had run along the sea-shore pursued by evil spirits, weary with tormenting lust.

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They were nearing the village. The light that now fell over the water just a few hundred feet away came from the terrace where the lively party were eating their evening meal and waiting for them. To enter once more into such a gay circle seemed madness to Beatrice; yes, entirely out of the realm of possibility. Why was she walking down this road? Why did she still remain at Hugo's side? What cowardice had it been, that had made her wish to bid him farewell, him, to whom she was no more than a tiresome old woman who wanted to force herself in on his secrets? Then, suddenly, she saw his eyes again turned on her with a look of entreaty, that awakened new fears and hopes in her.

"Hugo," she said.

And in tardy response to a question that she herself had already forgotten, he said: "It cannot be all right again. Telling will not help. It cannot."

"But, Hugo," she cried, as if newly emancipated, now that he had broken his silence. "Surely it will be all right; we are going away, Hugo, far away."

"What good will that do us, Mother?" Us?—Does that include me too? But isn't it better that way? Aren't we nearer to each other that way? He walked faster; she kept at his side—suddenly he stopped, looked out at the lake, and sighed deeply as if consolation and peace came to him from the solitude over the water. A few lighted row-boats were gliding out there. "Might that already be our party?" thought Beatrice casually. Certainly tonight they would have no moonlight. And suddenly an idea came to her: "How would it be, Hugo," she said, "if we were to go out rowing alone?" He looked up at the sky, as if seeking the moon. Beatrice understood the look and said: "We don't need the moon."

"What are we going to do out there on the dark water?" he asked weakly. She took his head in her hands, looked into his eyes, and said: "You shall tell me about it. You shall tell me what has happened to you, as you always have done formerly." She guessed that out in the friendly silence of the dark lake, his shyness, that now kept him from telling his mother what had happened, would leave him. Since she felt no resistance in his silence, she turned in decision towards the boat-house where her boat lay. The wooden door was not locked. She went into the dark boat-house with Hugo, unchained the boat hastily, as if there were no time to lose, then she swung over into the boat, and Hugo followed her. He took one of the oars, pushed away with it, and a second later, the open sky was over them. Now Hugo took the other oar and rowed along the shore, past the Lake Hotel, so near, that they could hear voices on the terrace. It seemed to Beatrice that she could hear the voice of the architect above the others. But she could not discern single figures or faces. How easy it was to flee from humanity! "What do I care what they are saying about me, what they think,

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or know—? You simply push your boat away from the shore, you go so near to people that you can hear their voices, and—it already makes no difference! When one is not coming back—” It sounded deep within her, and she trembled a little—she sat at the rudder and steered the boat towards the middle of the lake. The moon had not yet come up, but the water around them surrounded the boat with a dull circle of light, as if it had preserved the sunlight within itself. At times a ray came from the shore, in which Beatrice imagined she saw Hugo’s face becoming steadily fresher and freer from care. When they were quite far out, Hugo let the oars drop, took off his coat, and opened his collar. “How much like his father he looks,” thought Beatrice in painful surprise. “But I did not know him when he was so young. And how beautiful he is. His features are nobler than Ferdinand’s—and yet I never knew his real features, nor his voice. They were always the voices and faces of others. Am I seeing him today for the first time?” And she shuddered violently. But Hugo’s features, now that the boat was entirely in the black shadow of the mountains, began gradually to grow hazy. He began to row again, but very slowly, and they hardly moved at all. “Now is the time,” she thought, but she did not know for a moment for what it was time, until suddenly as if awakened out of a dream, the burning wish returned to her mind to know Hugo’s experience. And she asked: “Well, then, Hugo, what has happened?” He merely shook his head. But with growing excitement, she felt that he was no longer so firm in his refusal to speak. “Just speak to me, Hugo,” she said. “You can tell me everything. I already know so much. You can hardly imagine—” And as if she might banish the last trace of the spell, she whispered into the night: “Fortunata.”

Through Hugo’s body went a shudder, so powerful that it seemed to break the boat in two. Beatrice asked further: “You were with her today—and is this how you come back? What did she do to you, Hugo?” He was silent, rowed on rhythmically, and gazed into space. Suddenly, Beatrice was enlightened. She pressed her hands to her forehead, as if she did not understand why she had not guessed it earlier, and bending closer to Hugo, she whispered quickly: “The distant captain was there, was he not? And he found you with her?”

Hugo looked up. “The captain?”

Now for the first time, she realized that the man whom she meant was not a captain. “I mean the Baron,” she said. “Was he there? He found you? He insulted you? He beat you, Hugo?”

“No, Mother, the one you mention was not there. I do not know him at all. I swear it to you, Mother.”

“Then, what is it?” asked Beatrice. “Doesn’t she love you any more? Is she tired of you? Did she laugh at you? Did she show you the door? Is that it, Hugo?”

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"No, Mother." And he was silent.

"Well, then, Hugo, what is it? Do tell me."

"Don't ask me, Mother, don't ask me any more. It's too horrible."

Now her curiosity burst into flame. She felt that from somewhere in the confusion of this day so full of puzzles, so full of old and new questions, she must find the answer. She groped in the air with both hands, as if she wanted to gather something that was scattered there. She slipped down from the seat at the rudder, and sat at Hugo's feet. "Now, then, speak," she began. "You can tell me everything. You need not be shy, I understand everything. I am your mother, Hugo, and I am a woman. Can you realize that? You must not be afraid that you can wound me, or offend my modesty. I have experienced much these past days. I am still not an—old woman. I understand everything. Too much, my son—you must not think that we are so far apart, Hugo, and that there are things that you must not say to me." She felt in her confusion how she was giving herself up, how she was decoying him. "Oh, if you knew, Hugo, if you only knew—"

And the answer came: "I know, Mother." . . .

Beatrice trembled. Yet she felt no shame, only a relieved consciousness of being nearer to him and belonging to him. She sat at his feet at the bottom of the boat and took his hands in hers. "Tell me," she whispered.

And he spoke, but told her nothing. With heavy incoherent words he merely declared that he could never be seen among people again. What had happened to him today threw him forever out of the realm of the living.

"What has happened to you?"

"I was not in my right mind—I don't know what happened. They made me drunk."

"They made you drunk? Who, who? You were—not alone with Fortunata?" She remembered that she had seen him recently in the company of Wilhelmine Fallehn and the circus-rider. Then were they there? And with choking voice, she asked again, "What has happened?" But without Hugo's answer, she already knew. A picture painted itself before her eyes in the night, from which she wanted to turn in horror, but it followed her relentlessly and insolently behind her closed eyes. And in new, frightful suspicion she opened her eyes again, and turning them directly to Hugo sitting there in the darkness with tightly pressed lips, she asked: "Is it only since today that you know? Did they tell you over there?"

He made no answer, but a shudder ran through his body, so wild that it threw him weakly to the bottom of the boat beside Beatrice. She groaned aloud once in despair; and trembling forlornly, she grasped Hugo's feverishly shaking hands that he had stretched out to her. Now he left them in hers, and that did her good. She

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drew him nearer to her, pressed against him, and an agony of longing came from the depths of her soul and flowed mystically over to him. And both of them felt as if their boat, though it stood almost still, were moving on and on in growing speed. Whither was it taking them? Through what dream without aim? To what world without law? Did it ever have to go back to land? Dared it ever? Together they were bound on their everlasting journey; Heaven held no promise of morning for them in its clouds; and weakly succumbing to the anticipation of everlasting night, they gave each other their dying lips. The boat glided on, oarless, to farther shores, and Beatrice felt that she was kissing one whom she had never known before, one who was her husband for the first time.

As she felt consciousness returning, she had enough strength of mind left to beware of a complete awakening. Holding both Hugo's hands tightly in hers, she stepped to the side of the boat. As it listed, Hugo's eyes opened in a look touched with a fear that bound him for the last time to the common lot of man. Beatrice drew her beloved, her son, her partner in death, to her breast. Understanding, forgiving, emancipated, he closed his eyes. But hers took in once more the gray bank rising up in the menacing dusk, and before the indifferent waves pressed between her eyes, her dying look drank in the shadows of the fading world.